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New Years Gift for
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RURAL TALES;

PORTRAYING SOCIAL LIFE.

BY HANNAH MORE.

- I. THE TWO WEALTHY FARMERS.
- II. PARLEY THE PORTER.
- III. ALL FOR THE BEST.
- IV. TOM WHITE.
- V. PILGRIMS.
- VI. VALLEY OF TEARS.
- VII. THE STRAIT GATE AND THE BROAD WAY.

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NOTICE.

THE following series of characteristic delineations by Hannah More, are entitled Rural Tales, because the external scenes of the four principal narratives are placed in the country. However, they are chiefly biographical, exemplifying not only the practice, but the exercises of mankind, in their diversified relations and pursuits. "ALL FOR THE BEST," comprises a most impressive picture of the changes in human condition; and of the patience and resignation with which trying afflictions can be met, and of the only adequate method by which lasting sweet may be extracted from temporary bitterness, and constant gain from frequent disappointment. The "Two Wealthy Farmers" are graphical portraits of myriads of men in the same station of life, of similar principles and pursuits; and are equally profitable subjects of contemplation for all persons engaged in the active business of the World. "Parley the Porter" is one of Hannah More's most efficiently instructive pictures of man in his unthinking way-

wardness, to be found amid our moral portraitures. "Tom White" is the exact counterpart, in another state of society, of some of our American ploughboys and wagoners, who have vaulted from the humble employ of Jehus on the public highways to be charioteers of the State. The volume will be found to be an excellent counterpart to the "Domestic Tales" by the same charming authoress; both of them, in truth, illustrating the Poet's couplet:—

"A twofold gift in this neat volume lies,
It makes you *merry*, and it makes you wise!"

NEW YORK, *August 7*, 1844.

RURAL TALES.

I. THE TWO WEALTHY FARMERS;

OR, THE HISTORY OF MR. BRAGWELL.

I.—THE VISIT.

MR. BRAGWELL and Mr. Worthy happened to meet last year at Weyhill fair. They were glad to see each other, as they had but seldom met of late; Mr. Bragwell having removed some years before from Mr. Worthy's neighborhood, to a distant village.

Mr. Bragwell was a substantial farmer and grazier. He had risen in the world by what worldly men call a run of good fortune. He had also been a man of great industry; that is, he had paid a diligent and constant attention to his own interest. He understood business, and had a knack of turning almost everything to his own advantage. He had that sort of sense which good men call cunning, and knaves call wisdom. He was too prudent ever to do anything so wrong that the law could take hold of him; yet he was not over scrupulous about the morality of an action, when the prospect of enriching himself by it was very great, and the chance of hurting his character was small. The corn he sent home to his customers was not always quite so good as the samples he had produced at market; and he now and then forgot to name some capital blemish in the horses he sold at fair. He scorned to be guilty of the pretty frauds of cheating in weights and measures, for he thought that was a beggarly sin; but he valued himself on his skill in making a bargain,

and fancied it showed his superior knowledge of the world to take advantage of the ignorance of a dealer.

It was his constant rule to undervalue everything he was about to buy, and to overvalue everything he was about to sell; but as he seldom lost sight of his discretion, he avoided everything that was very shameful; so that he was considered merely as a hard dealer, and a keen hand at a bargain. Now and then when he had been caught in pushing his own advantage too far, he contrived to get out of the scrape by turning the whole into a jest, saying it was a good take in, a rare joke, and he had only a mind to divert himself with the folly of his neighbor, who could be so easily imposed on.

Mr. Bragwell, however, in his way, set a high value on character: not indeed that he had a right sense of its worth; he did not consider reputation as desirable because it increases influence, and for that reason strengthens the hands of a good man, and enlarges his sphere of usefulness: but he made the advantage of reputation, as well as of every other good, centre in himself. Had he observed a strict attention to principle, he feared he should not have got on so fast in the world as those do who consult expediency rather than probity, while, without a certain degree of character, he knew also, that he should forfeit that confidence which put other men in his power, and would set them as much on their guard against him, as he, who thought all mankind pretty much alike, was on his guard against them.

Mr. Bragwell had one favorite maxim; namely, that a man's success in life was a sure proof of his wisdom: and that all failure and misfortune was the consequence of a man's own folly. As this opinion was first taken up by him from vanity and ignorance, so it was more and more confirmed by his own prosperity. He saw that he himself had succeeded greatly without either money or education to begin with; and he therefore now despised every man, however excel-

lent his character or talents might be, who had not the same success in life. His natural disposition was not particularly bad, but prosperity had hardened his heart. He made his own progress in life the rule by which the conduct of all other men was to be judged, without any allowance for their peculiar disadvantages, or the visitations of Providence. He thought, for his part, that every man of sense could command success on his undertakings, and control and dispose the events of his own life.

But though he considered those who had had less success than himself as no better than fools, yet he did not extend this opinion to Mr. Worthy, whom he looked upon not only as a good but a wise man. They had been bred up when children in the same house; but with this difference, that Worthy was the nephew of the master, and Bragwell the son of the servant.

Bragwell's father had been ploughman in the family of Mr. Worthy's uncle, a sensible man, who farmed a small estate of his own, and who having no children, bred up young Worthy as his son, instructed him in the business of husbandry, and at his death left him his estate. The father of Worthy was a pious clergyman, who lived with his brother the farmer, in order to help out a narrow income. He had bestowed much pains on the instruction of his son, and used frequently to repeat to him a saying, which he had picked up in a book written by one of the greatest men this country ever produced—That there were two things with which every man ought to be acquainted, RELIGION AND HIS OWN BUSINESS.—While he therefore took care that his son should be made an excellent farmer, he filled up his leisure hours in improving his mind: so that young Worthy had read more good books, and understood them better, than most men in his station. His reading, however, had been chiefly confined to husbandry and divinity, the two subjects which were of the most immediate importance to him.

The reader will see by this time that Mr. Bragwell

and Mr. Worthy were as likely to be as opposite to each other as two men could well be, who were nearly of the same age and condition, and who were neither of them without credit in the world. Bragwell indeed made far the greater figure; for he liked to *cut a dash*, as he called it. It was his delight to make the ancient gentry of the neighborhood stare, at seeing a grazier vie with them in show, and exceed them in expense. And while it was the study of Worthy to conform to his station, and to set a good example to those about him, it was the delight of Bragwell to eclipse, in his way of life, men of larger fortune. He did not see how much his vanity raised the envy of his inferiors, the ill-will of his equals, and the contempt of his betters.

His wife was a notable stirring woman, but vain, violent, and ambitious; very ignorant, and very high-minded. She had married Bragwell before he was worth a shilling, and as she had brought him a good deal of money, she thought herself the grand cause of his rising in the world; and thence took occasion to govern him most completely. Whenever he ventured to oppose her, she took care to put him in mind that he owed everything to her; that had it not been for her, he might still have been stumping after a plough-tail, or serving hogs in old Worthy's farm-yard; but that it was she who had made a gentleman of him. In order to set about making him a gentleman, she had begun by teasing him till he had turned away all his poor relations who worked in the farm: she next drew him off from keeping company with his old acquaintance; and at last persuaded him to remove from the place where he had got his money. Poor woman! she had not sense and virtue enough to see how honorable it is for a man to raise himself in the world by fair means, and then to help forward his poor relations and friends; engaging their services by his kindness, and endeavoring to turn his own advancement in life to the best account, that of making

it the instrument of assisting those who had a natural claim to his protection.

Mrs. Bragwell was an excellent mistress, according to her own notions of excellence; for no one could say she ever lost an opportunity of scolding a servant, or was ever guilty of the weakness of overlooking a fault. Toward her two daughters her behavior was far otherwise. In them she could see nothing but perfections, but her extravagant fondness for these girls was full as much owing to pride as to affectation. She was bent on making a family, and having found out that she was too ignorant, and too much trained to the habits of getting money, ever to hope to make a figure herself, she looked to her daughters as the persons who were to raise the family of the Bragwells; and to this hope she foolishly submitted to any drudgery for their sakes, and bore every kind of impertinence from them.

The first wish of her heart was to set them above their neighbors; for she used to say, what was the use of having substance, if her daughters might not carry themselves above girls who had nothing? To do her justice, she herself would be about early and late to see that the business of the house was not neglected. She had been bred to great industry, and continued to work when it was no longer necessary, both from early habit, and the desire of heaping up money for her daughters. Yet her whole notion of gentility was, that it consisted in being rich and idle; and, though she was willing to be a drudge herself, she resolved to make her daughters gentlewomen on this principle. To be well dressed, to eat elegantly, and to do nothing, or nothing of which is of any use, was what she fancied distinguished people in genteel life. And this is too common a notion of a fine education among a certain class; they do not esteem things by their use, but by their show. They estimate the value of their children's education by the money it costs, and not by the knowledge and goodness it

bestows. People of this stamp often take a pride in the expense of learning, instead of taking pleasure in the advantages of it. And the silly vanity of letting others see that they can afford anything, often sets parents on letting their daughters learn not only things of no use, but things which may be really hurtful in their situation; either by setting them above their proper duties, or by taking up their time in a way inconsistent with them.

Mrs. Bragwell sent her daughters to a boarding-school, where she instructed them to hold up their heads as high as anybody; to have more spirit than *to be put upon* by any one; never to be pitiful about money, but rather to show that they could afford to spend with the best; to keep company with the richest and most fashionable girls in the school, and to make no acquaintance with farmers' daughters.

They came home at the usual age of leaving school, with a large portion of vanity grafted on their native ignorance. The vanity was added but the ignorance was not taken away. Of religion they could not possibly learn anything, since none was taught, for at that place Christianity was considered as a part of education which belonged only to charity-schools. They went to church indeed once a Sunday, yet effectually to counteract any benefit such an attendance might produce, it was the rule of the school that they should use only French prayer-books; of course, such superficial scholars as the Miss Bragwells would always be literally praying in an unknown tongue; while girls of better capacity and more industry would infallibly be picking out the nominative case, the verb, and participle of a foreign language, in the solemn act of kneeling before the Father of Spirits, "who searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins." During the remainder of the Sunday they learned their worldly tasks, all except actual needlework, which omission alone marked the distinction of Sunday from other days; and the governess being a French Roman Cath-

olic, it became a doubtful point with some people, whether her zeal or her negligence in the article of religion would be most to the advantage of her pupils. Of knowledge the Miss Bragwells had got just enough to laugh at their fond parents' rustic manners and vulgar language, and just enough taste to despise and ridicule every girl who was not as vainly dressed as themselves.

The mother had been comforting herself for the heavy expense of their bringing up, by looking forward to the pleasure of seeing them become fine ladies, and the pride of marrying them above their station; and to this hope she constantly referred in all her conversations with them; assuring them that all her happiness depended on their future elevation.

Their father hoped, with far more judgment, that they would be a comfort to him both in sickness and in health. He had had no learning himself, and could write but poorly, and owed what skill he had in figures to his natural turn of business. He reasonably hoped that his daughters, after all the money he had spent on them, would now write his letters and keep his accounts. And as he was now and then laid up with a fit of the gout, he was enjoying the prospect of having two affectionate children to nurse him, as well as two skilful assistants to relieve him.

When they came home, however, he had the mortification to find, that though he had two smart showy ladies to visit him, he had neither dutiful daughters to nurse him, nor faithful stewards to keep his books, nor prudent children to manage his house. They neither soothed him by their kindness when he was sick, nor helped him by their industry when he was busy. They thought the maid might take care of him in the gout as she did before; for they fancied that nursing was a coarse and servile employment: and as to their skill in ciphering, he soon found, to his cost, that though they knew how to *spend* both pounds, shillings, and pence, yet they did not know

how so well to cast them up. Indeed it is to be regretted that women in general, especially in the middle class, are so little grounded in so indispensable, solid, and valuable an acquirement as arithmetic.

Mrs. Bragwell being one day very busy in preparing a great dinner for the neighbors, ventured to request her daughters to assist in making the pastry. They asked her with a scornful smile, whether she had sent them to a boarding-school to learn to cook; and added, that they supposed she would expect them next to make hasty-puddings for the haymakers. So saying, they coolly marched off to their music. When the mother found her girls were too polite to be of any use, she would take comfort in observing how her parlor was set out with their filagree and flowers, their embroidery and cut paper. They spent the morning in bed, the noon in dressing, the evening at the harpsichord, and the night in reading novels.

With all these fine qualifications it is easy to suppose, that as they despised their sober duties, they no less despised their plain neighbors. When they could not get to a horse-race, a petty ball, or a strolling play, with some company as idle and as smart as themselves, they were driven for amusement to the circulating library. Jack, the ploughboy, on whom they had now put a livery-jacket, was employed half his time in trotting backward and forward with the most wretched trash the little neighboring bookshop could furnish. The choice was often left to Jack, who could not read, but who had general orders to bring all the new things, and a great many of them.

It was a misfortune, that at the school at which they had been bred, and at some others, there was no system of education which had any immediate reference to the station of life to which the girls chiefly belonged. As persons in the middle line, for want of that acquaintance with books, and with life and manners, which the great possess, do not always see the connexion between remote consequences and their

causes, the evils of a corrupt and inappropriate system of education do not strike *them* so forcibly; and provided *they can pay for it*, which is made the grand criterion between the fit and the unfit, they are too little disposed to consider the value, or rather the worthlessness, of the thing which is paid for: but literally go on to *give their money for that which is not bread*.

Their subsequent course of reading serves to establish all the errors of their education. Instead of such books as might help to confirm and strengthen them in all the virtues of their station, in humility, economy, meekness, contentment, self-denial, and industry; the studies now adopted are, by a graft on the old stock, made to grow on the habits acquired at school. Of those novels and plays which are so eagerly devoured by persons of this description, there is perhaps scarce one which is not founded upon principles which would lead young women of the middle ranks to be discontented with their station. It is *rank*—it is *elegancee*—it is *beauty*—it is *sentimental feelings*—it is *sensibility*—it is some needless, or some superficial, or some quality hurtful, even in that fashionable person to whom the author ascribes it, which is the ruling principle. This quality transferred into the heart and the conduct of an illiterate woman in an inferior station, becomes absurdity, becomes sinfulness.

Things were in this state in the family we are describing, or rather growing worse; for idleness and vanity are never at a stand; when these two wealthy farmers, Bragwell and Worthy, met at Weyhill fair, as was said before. After many hearty salutations had passed between them, it was agreed that Mr. Bragwell should spend the next day with his old friend, whose house was not many miles distant. Bragwell invited himself in the following manner: "We have not had a comfortable day's chat for

years," said he, "and as I am to look at a drove of lean beasts in your neighborhood, I will take a bed at your house, and we will pass the evening in debating as we used to do. You know I always loved a bit of an argument, and am not reckoned to make the worst figure at our club: I had not, to be sure, such good learning as you had, because your father was a parson, and you got it for nothing: but I can bear my part pretty well for all that. When any man talks to me about his learning, I ask if it has helped him to a good estate; if he says no, then I would not give him a rush for it; for of what use is all the learning in the world, if it does not make a man rich? But, as I was saying, I will come and see you to-morrow; but now don't let your wife put herself in a fuss for me: don't alter your own plain way; for I am not proud, I assure you, nor above my old friends; though, I thank God, I am pretty well in the world."

To all this flourishing speech Mr. Worthy coolly answered, that certainly worldly prosperity ought never to make any man proud, since it is God who giveth strength to get riches, and without his blessing, *'tis in vain to rise up early, and to eat the bread of carefulness.*

About the middle of the next day Mr. Bragwell reached Mr. Worthy's neat and pleasant dwelling. He found everything in it the reverse of his own. It had not so many ornaments, but it had more comforts. And when he saw his friend's good old-fashioned arm-chair in a warm corner, he gave a sigh to think how his own had been banished to make room for his daughters' pianoforte. Instead of made flowers in glass cases, and tea-chests and screens too fine to be used, which he saw at home, and about which he was cautioned, and scolded as often as he came near them—his daughters watching his motions with the same anxiety as they would have watched the motions of a cat in a china shop—instead of this, I say, he saw some neat shelves of good books for the service

of the family, and a small medicine chest for the benefit of the poor.

Mrs. Worthy and her daughters had prepared a plain but neat and good dinner. The tarts were so excellent, that Bragwell felt a secret kind of regret that his own daughters were too genteel to do anything so very useful. Indeed, he had been always unwilling to believe that anything which was very proper and very necessary, could be so extremely vulgar and unbecoming as his daughters were always declaring it to be. And his late experience of the little comfort he found at home, inclined him now still more strongly to suspect that things were not so right there as he had been made to suppose. But it was in vain to speak; for his daughters constantly stopped his mouth by a favorite saying of theirs, which equally indicated affectation and vulgarity, that it was better to be out of the world than out of the fashion.

Soon after dinner the women went out to their several employments; and Mr. Worthy being left alone with his guest, the following discourse took place:

Bragwell. You have a couple of sober, pretty-looking girls, Worthy; but I wonder they don't tiff off a little more. Why, my girls have as much fat and flour on their heads as would half maintain my reapers in suet-pudding.

Worthy. Mr. Bragwell, in the management of my family, I don't consider what I might afford only, though that is one great point; but I consider also what is needful and becoming in a man of my station; for there are so many useful ways of laying out money, that I feel as if it were a sin to spend one unnecessary shilling. Having had the blessing of a good education myself, I have been able to give the like advantage to my daughters. One of the best lessons I have taught them is, to know themselves; and one proof that they have learned this lesson is, that they are not above any of the duties of their station. They

read and write well, and when my eyes are bad, they keep my accounts in a very pretty manner. If I had put them to learn what you call *genteel things*, these might either have been of no use to them, and so both time and money thrown away; or they might proved worse than nothing to them by leading them into wrong notions, and wrong company. Though we do not wish them to do the laborious parts of the dairy work, yet they always assist their mother in the management of it. As to their appearance, they are every day nearly as you see them now, and on Sunday they are very neatly dressed, but it is always in a decent and modest way. There are no lappets, fringes, furbelows, and tawdry ornaments; no trains, turbans, and flounces, fluttering about my cheese and butter. And I should feel no vanity, but much mortification, if a stranger seeing Farmer Worthy's daughters at church should ask who those fine ladies were.

Bragwell. Now I own I should like to have such a question asked concerning my daughters. I like to make people stare and envy. It makes one feel oneself somebody. I never feel the pleasure of having handsome things so much as when I see they raise curiosity; and enjoy the envy of others as a fresh evidence of my own prosperity. But as to yourself, to be sure, you best know what you can afford; and indeed there is some difference between your daughters and the Miss Bragwells.

Worthy. For my part, before I engage in any expense, I always ask myself these two short questions; First, can I afford it?—Secondly, is it proper for me?

Bragwell. Do you so? Now I own I ask myself but one; for if I find I can afford it, I take care to make it proper for me. If I can pay for a thing, no one has a right to hinder me from having it.

Worthy. Certainly. But a man's own prudence, his love of propriety and sense of duty, ought to prevent him from doing an improper thing, as effectually as if there were somebody to hinder him.

Bragwell. Now, I think a man is a fool who is hindered from having anything he has a mind to ; unless indeed, he is in want of money to pay for it. I am no friend to debt. A poor man must want on.

Worthy. But I hope my children have not learnt to want anything which is not proper for them. They are very industrious ; they attend to business all day, and in the evening they sit down to their work and a good book. I take care that neither their reading nor conversation shall excite any desires or tastes unsuitable to their condition. They have little vanity, because the kind of knowledge they have is of too sober a sort to raise admiration ; and from that vanity which attends a little smattering of frivolous accomplishments, I have secured them, by keeping them in total ignorance of all such. I think they live in the fear of God. I trust they are humble and pious, and I am sure they seem cheerful and happy. If I am sick, it is pleasant to see them dispute which shall wait upon me ; for they say the maid can not do it so tenderly as themselves.

This part of the discourse staggered Bragwell. An involuntary tear rushed into his eye. Vain as he was, he could not help feeling what a difference a religious and a worldly education made on the heart, and how much the former regulated even the natural temper. Another thing which surprised him was, that these girls living a life of domestic piety, without any public diversions, should be so very cheerful and happy ; while his own daughters, who were never contradicted, and were indulged with continual amusements, were always sullen and ill-tempered. That they who were more humored should be less grateful, and they who were more amused less happy, disturbed him much. He envied Worthy the tenderness of his children, though he would not own it, but turned it off thus :

Bragwell. But my girls are too smart to make mops of, that is the truth. Though ours is a lonely village,

it is wonderful to see how soon they get the fashions. What with the descriptions in the magazines, and the pictures in the pocket-books, they have them in a twinkling; and outdo their patterns all to nothing. I used to take in the *Country Journal*, because it was useful enough to see how oats went, the time of high water, and the price of stocks. But when my ladies came home, forsooth, I was soon wheedled out of that, and forced to take a London paper, that tells a deal about the caps and feathers, and all the trumpery of the quality, and the French dress, and the French undress. When I want to know what hops are a bag, they are snatching the paper to see what violet soap is a pound. And as to the dairy, they never care how cow's milk goes, as long as they can get some stuff which they call milk of roses. Seeing them disputing violently the other day about cream and butter, I thought it a sign they were beginning to care for the farm, till I found it was cold cream for the hands, and jessamine butter for the hair.

Worthy. But do your daughters never read?

Bragwell. Read! I believe they do too. Why our Jack, the plough-boy, spends half his time in going to a shop in our market town, where they let out books to read with marble covers. And they sell paper with all manner of colors on the edges, and gim-cracks, and powder-puffs, and wash-balls, and cards without any pips, and everything in the world that's genteel and of no use. 'Twas but the other day I met Jack with a basketful of these books; so having some time to spare, I sat down to see a little what they were about.

Worthy. Well, I hope you there found what was likely to improve your daughters, and teach them the true use of time.

Bragwell. O, as to that, you are pretty much out. I could make neither head nor tail of it; it was neither fish, flesh, nor good red-herring: it was all about my lord, and Sir Harry, and the captain. But I never met

with such nonsensical fellows in my life. Their talk was no more like that of my old landlord, who was a lord you know, nor the captain of our fensibles, than chalk is like cheese. I was fairly taken in at first, and began to think I had got hold of a *godly* book; for there was a deal about hope and despair, and death, and heaven, and angels, and torments, and everlasting happiness. But when I got a little on, I found there was no meaning in all these words, or if any, it was a bad meaning. Eternal misery, perhaps, only meant a moment's disappointment about a bit of a letter; and everlasting happiness meant two people talking nonsense together for five minutes. In short, I never met with such a pack of lies. The people talk such wild gibberish as no folks in their sober senses ever did talk; and the things that happen to them, are not like the things that even happen to me or any of my acquaintance. They are at home one minute, and beyond sea the next: beggars to-day, and lords to-morrow; waiting maids in the morning, and dutchesses at night. Nothing happens in a natural gradual way, as it does at home; they grow rich by the stroke of a wand, and poor by the magic of a word; the disinherited orphan of this hour is the overgrown heir of the next: now a bride and bridegroom turn out to be brother and sister, and the brother and sister prove to be no relations at all. You and I, Master Worthy, have worked hard many years, and think it very well to have scraped a trifle of money together; you, a few hundreds I suppose, and I a few thousands. But one would think every man in these books had the bank of England in his 'scrutoire. Then there is another thing which I never met with in true life. We think it pretty well, you know, if one has got one thing, and another has got another. I will tell you how I mean. You are reckoned sensible, our parson is learned, the squire is rich, I am rather generous, one of your daughters is pretty, and both mine are genteel. But in these books (except here and there one, whom they

make worse than Satan himself) every man and woman's child of them, are all wise, and witty, and generous, and rich, and handsome, and genteel; and all to the last degree. Nobody is middling, or good in one thing, and bad in another, like my live acquaintance; but it is all up to the skies, or down to the dirt. I had rather read Tom Hickathrift, or Jack the Giant Killer, a thousand times.

Worthy. You have found out, Mr. Bragwell, that many of these books are ridiculous; I will go farther, and say, that to me they appear wicked also: and I should account the reading of them a great mischief, especially to people in middling and low life, if I only took into the account the great loss of time such reading causes, and the aversion it leaves behind for what is more serious and solid. But this, though a bad part, is not the worst. These books give false views of human life. They teach a contempt for humble and domestic duties; for industry, frugality, and retirement. Want of youth and beauty is considered in them as ridiculous. Plain people, like you and me, are objects of contempt. Parental authority is set at naught. Nay, plots and contrivances against parents and guardians, fill half the volumes. They consider love as the great business of human life, and even teach that it is impossible for this love to be regulated or restrained; and to the indulgence of this passion every duty is therefore sacrificed. A country life, with a kind mother or a sober aunt, is described as a state of intolerable misery: and one would be apt to fancy from their painting, that a country house is a prison, and a worthy father the jailer. Vice is set off with every ornament which can make it pleasing and amiable; while virtue and piety are made ridiculous, by tacking to them something that is silly or absurd. Crimes which would be considered as hanging matter at our county assizes—at least if I were a jurymen, I should bring in the whole train of heroes, *Guilty—Death—* are here made to the appearance of virtue, by being

mixed with some wild flight of unnatural generosity. Those crying sins, ADULTERY, GAMING, DUELS, and SELF-MURDER, are made so familiar, and the wickedness of them is so disguised by fine words and soft descriptions, that even innocent girls get loose to their abhorrence, and talk with complacency, of *things which should not be so much as named by them.*

I should not have said so much on this mischief (continued Mr. Worthy) from which I dare say, great folks fancy people in our station are safe enough, if I do not know and lament that this corrupt reading is now got down even among some of the lowest class. And it is an evil which is spreading every day. Poor industrious girls, who get their bread by the needle or the loom, spend half the night in listening to these books. Thus the labor of one girl is lost, and the minds of the rest are corrupted; for though their hands are employed in honest industry, which might help to preserve them from a life of sin, yet their hearts are at the very time polluted by scenes and descriptions which are too likely to plunge them into it: and when their vain weak heads compare the soft and delicious lives of the heroines in the book, with their own mean garb and hard labor, the effect is obvious; and I think I do not go too far when I say, that the vain and showy manner in which young women, who have to work for their bread, have taken to dress themselves, added to the poison they draw from these books, contribute together to bring them to destruction, more than almost any other cause. Now tell me, do not you think these wild books will hurt your daughters?

Bragwell. Why I do think they are grown full of schemes, and contrivances and whispers, that's the truth on't. Everything is a secret. They always seem to be on the look out for something, and when nothing comes on't, then they are sulky and disappointed. They will keep company with their equals: they despise trade and farming; and I own *I'm for the stuff.* I should not like them to marry any but a man

of substance, if he was ever so smart. Now they will hardly sit down with a substantial country dealer. But if they hear of a recruiting party in our market-town, on goes the finery—off they are. Some flimsy excuse is patched up. They want something at the book-shop or the milliner's; because I suppose there is a chance for some Jack-a-napes of an ensign may be there buying sticking-plaster. In short, I do grow a little uneasy; for I should not like to see all I have saved thrown away on a knapsack.

So saying, they both rose and walked out to view the farm. Mr. Bragwell affected greatly to admire the good order of everything he saw; but never forgot to compare it with something larger, and handsomer, or better of his own. It was easy to see that *self* was his standard of perfection in everything. All he himself possessed gained some increased value in his eyes from being his; and in surveying the property of his friend, he derived food for his vanity, from things which seemed least likely to raise it. Every appearance of comfort, of success, of merit, in anything which belonged to Mr. Worthy led him to speak of some superior advantage of his own of the same kind: and it was clear that the chief part of the satisfaction he felt in walking over the farm of his friend, was caused by thinking how much larger his own was.

Mr. Worthy, who felt a kindness for him, which all his vanity could not cure, was always on the watch how to turn their talk on some useful point. And whenever people resolve to go into company with this view, it is commonly their own fault, if some opportunity of turning it to account does not offer.

He saw Bragwell was intoxicated with pride, and undone by success; and that his family was in the high road to ruin through mere prosperity. He thought that if some means could be found to open his eyes on his own character, to which he was now totally blind, it might be of the utmost service to him. The more Mr. Worthy reflected, the more he wished

to undertake this kind office. He was not sure that Mr. Bragwell would bear it, but he was very sure it was his duty to attempt it. As Mr. Worthy was very humble himself, he had great patience and forbearance with the faults of others. He felt no pride at having escaped the errors into which they had fallen, for he knew who it was had *made him to differ*. He remembered that God had given him many advantages; a pious father and a religious education; this made him humble under a sense of his own sins, and charitable toward the sins of others, who had not the same privileges.

Just as he was going to try to enter into a very serious conversation with his guest, he was stopped by the appearance of his daughter, who told them supper was ready.

II.—A CONVERSATION.

Soon after supper Mrs. Worthy left the room with her daughters, at her husband's desire; for it was his intention to speak more plainly to Bragwell than was likely to be agreeable to him to hear before others. The two farmers being seated at their little table, each in a handsome old-fashioned great chair, Bragwell began.

"It is a great comfort, Neighbor Worthy, at a certain time of life to be got above the world: my notion is, that a man should labor hard the first part of his days, that he may then sit down and enjoy himself the remainder. Now, though I hate boasting, yet as you are my oldest friend, I am about to open my heart to you. Let me tell you then I reckon I have worked as hard as any man in my time, and that I now begin to think I have a right to indulge a little. I have got my money with character, and I mean to spend it with credit. I pay every one his own, I set

a good example, I keep to my church, I serve God, I honor the king, and I obey the laws of the land."

"This is doing a great deal indeed," replied Mr. Worthy: "but," added he, "I doubt that more goes to the making up all these duties than men are commonly aware of. Suppose then that you and I talk the matter over coolly; we have the evening before us. What if we sit down together as two friends and examine one another."

Bragwell, who loved argument, and who was not a little vain both of his sense and his morality, accepted the challenge, and gave his word that he would take in good part anything that should be said to him. Worthy was about to proceed, when Bragwell interrupted him for a moment, by saying—"But stop, friend, before we begin I wish you would remember that we have had a long walk, and I want a little refreshment; have you no liquor that is stronger than this cider? I am afraid it will give me a fit of the gout."

Mr. Worthy immediately produced a bottle of wine, and another of spirits; saying, that though he drank neither spirits nor even wine himself, yet his wife always kept a little of each as a provision in case of sickness or accidents.

Farmer Bragwell preferred the brandy, and began to taste it. "Why," said he, "this is no better than English; I always use foreign myself." "I bought this for foreign," said Mr. Worthy. "No, no, it is English spirits I assure you; but I can put you into a way to get foreign nearly as cheap as English." Mr. Worthy replied that he thought that was impossible.

Bragwell. O no; there are ways and means—a word to the wise—there is an acquaintance of mine that lives upon the south coast—you are a particular friend and I will get you half-a-dozen gallons for a trifle.

Worthy. Not if it be smuggled, Mr. Bragwell, though I should get it for sixpence a bottle. "Ask

no questions," said the other, "I never say anything to any one, and who is the wiser?" "And so this is your way of obeying the laws of the land," said Mr. Worthy—"here is a fine specimen of your morality."

Bragwell. Come, come, don't make a fuss about trifles. If *every one* did it indeed it would be another thing; but as to *my* getting a little good brandy cheap, why that can't hurt the revenue much.

Worthy. Pray, Mr. Bragwell, what should you think of a man who would dip his hand into a bag and take out a few guineas?

Bragwell. Think? why I think that he should be hanged, to be sure.

Worthy. But suppose that bag stood in the king's treasury?

Bragwell. In the king's treasury! worse and worse! What, rob the king's treasury! Well, I hope if any one has done it, the robber will be taken up and executed; for I suppose we shall all be taxed to pay the damage.

Worthy. Very true. If one man takes money out of the treasury, others must be obliged to pay the more into it. But what think you if the fellow should be found to have stopped some money *in its way* to the treasury, instead of taking it out of the bag after it got there?

Bragwell. Guilty, Mr. Worthy; it is all the same, in my opinion. If I were judge I would hang him without benefit of clergy.

Worthy. Hark ye, Mr. Bragwell, he that deals in smuggled brandy is the man who takes to himself the king's money in its way to the treasury, and he as much robs the government as if he dipped his hands into a bag of guineas in the treasury-chamber. It comes to the same thing exactly. Here Bragwell seemed a little offended, and exclaimed—"What, Mr. Worthy, do you pretend to say I am not an honest man because I like to get my brandy as cheap as I can? and because I like to save a shilling to my fam-

ily? Sir, I repeat it; I do my duty to God and my neighbor. I say the Lord's prayer most days, I go to church on Sundays, I repeat my creed, and keep the ten commandments; and though I now and then get a little brandy cheap, yet upon the whole, I will venture to say, I do as much as can be expected of any man, and more than the generality."

Worthy. Come, then, since you say you keep the commandments, you can not be offended if I ask you whether you understand them.

Bragwell. To be sure I do. I dare say I do: look'ye, Mr. Worthy, I don't pretend to much reading, I was not bred to it as you were. If my father had been a parson, I fancy I should have made as good a figure as some other folks, but I hope good sense and a good heart may teach a man his duty without much scholarship.

Worthy. To come to the point; let us now go through the ten commandments, and let us take along with us those explanations of them which our Savior gave us in his sermon on the mount.

Bragwell. Sermon on the mount! why the ten commandments are in the 20th chapter of Exodus. Come, come, Mr. Worthy, I know where to find the commandments as well as you do; for it happens that I am church-warden, and I can see from the altar-piece where the ten commandments are, without your telling me, for my pew directly faces it.

Worthy. But I advise you to read the sermon on the mount, that you may see the full meaning of them.

Bragwell. What! do you want to make me believe there are two ways of keeping the commandments?

Worthy. No; but there may be two ways of understanding them.

Bragwell. Well, I am not afraid to be put to the proof; I defy any man to say I do not keep at least

all the first four that are on the left side of the altar-piece.

Worthy. If you can prove that, I shall be more ready to believe you observe those of the other table; for he who does his duty to God, will be likely to do his duty to his neighbor also.

Bragwell. What! do you think that I serve two Gods? Do you think then that I make graven images, and worship stocks or stones? Do you take me for a papist or an idolater?

Worthy. Don't triumph quite so soon, Master Bragwell. Pray is there nothing in the world you prefer to God, and thus make an idol of? Do you not love your money, or your lands, or your crops, or your cattle, or your own will, or your own way, rather better than you love God? Do you never think of these with more pleasure than you think of him, and follow them more eagerly than your religious duty?

Bragwell. O! there's nothing about that in the 20th chapter of Exodus.

Worthy. But Jesus Christ has said, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me." Now it is certainly a man's duty to love his father and his mother; nay, it would be wicked not to love them, and yet we must not love even these more than our Creator and our Savior. Well, I think on this principle, your heart pleads guilty to the breach of the first and second commandments; let us proceed to the third.

Bragwell. That is about swearing, is it not?

Mr. Worthy, who had observed Bragwell guilty of much profaneness in using the name of his Maker (though all such offensive words have been avoided in writing this history), now told him that he had been waiting the whole day for an opportunity to reprove him for his frequent breach of the third commandment.

"Good L—d! I break the third commandment!" said Bragwell; "no indeed, hardly ever, I once used

to swear a little to be sure, but I vow I never do it now, except now and then when I happen to be in a passion : and in such a case, why, good G—d, you know the sin is with those who provoke me, and not with me ; but, upon my soul, I don't think I have sworn an oath these three months, no not I, faith, as I hope to be saved."

Worthy. And yet you have broken this holy law not less than five or six times in the last speech you have made.

Bragwell. Lord bless me ! Sure you mistake. Good heavens, Mr. Worthy, I call G—d to witness, I have neither cursed nor swore since I have been in the house.

Worthy. Mr. Bragwell, this is the way in which many who call themselves very good sort of people deceive themselves. What ! is it no profanation of the name of your Maker to use it lightly, irreverently, and familiarly as you have done ? Our Savior has not only told us not to swear by the immediate name of God, but he has said, "Swear not at all, neither by heaven nor by the earth," and in order to hinder our inventing any other irreligious exclamations or expressions, he has even added, "but let your communications be yea, yea, and nay, nay ; for whatsoever is more than this simple affirmation and denial cometh of evil." Nay more, so greatly do I reverence that high and holy name, that I think even some good people have it too frequently in their mouths ; and that they might convey the idea without the word.

Bragwell. Well, well, I must take a little more care, I believe. I vow to Heaven I did not know there had been so much harm in it ; but my daughters seldom speak without using some of these words, and yet they wanted to make me believe the other day that it was monstrous vulgar to swear.

Worthy. Women, even gentlewomen, who ought to correct this evil habit in their fathers, and husbands,

and children, are too apt to encourage it by their own practice. And indeed they betray the profaneness of their own minds also by it; for none who venerate the holy name of God, can either profane it in this manner themselves, or hear others do so without being exceedingly pained at it.

Bragwell. Well, since you are so hard upon me, I believe I must e'en give up this point—so let us pass on to the next, and here I tread upon sure ground; for as sharp as you are upon me, you can't accuse me of being a sabbath-breaker, since I go to church every Sunday of my life, unless on some very extraordinary occasion.

Worthy. For those occasions the gospel allows, by saying, "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath." Our own sickness, or attending on the sickness of others, are lawful impediments.

Bragwell. Yes, and I am now and then obliged to look at a drove of beasts, or to go a journey, or take some medicine, or perhaps some friend may call upon me, or it may be very cold, or very hot, or very rainy.

Worthy. Poor excuses! Mr. Bragwell. Do you call these lawful impediments? I am afraid they will not pass for such on the day of judgment. But how is the rest of your Sunday spent?

Bragwell. O why, I assure you I often go to church in the afternoon also, and even if I am ever so sleepy.

Worthy. And so you finish your nap at church, I suppose.

Bragwell. Why as to that, to be sure we do contrive to have something a little nicer than common for dinner on a Sunday: in consequence of which one eats, you know a little more than ordinary; and having nothing to do on that day, has more leisure to take a cheerful glass; and all these things will make one a little heavy you know.

Worthy. And don't you take a little ride in the morning, and look at your sheep when the weather is good; and so fill your mind just before you go to

church with thought of them ; and when the weather is bad, don't you settle an account ? or write a few letters of business after church ?

Bragwell. I can't say but I do ; but that is nothing to anybody, as long as I set a good example by keeping to my church.

Worthy. And how do you pass your Sunday evenings ?

Bragwell. My wife and daughters go a visiting Sunday afternoons. My daughters are glad to get out at any rate ; and as to my wife, she says that being ready dressed, it is a pity to lose the opportunity : besides, it saves her time on a week day ; so then you see I have it all my own way, and when I have got rid of the ladies, who are ready to faint at the smell of tobacco, I can venture to smoke a pipe, and drink a sober glass of punch with half a dozen friends.

Worthy. Which punch being made of smuggled brandy, and drunk on the Lord's-day, and very vain, as well as profane and worldly company, you are enabled to break both the law of God, and that of your country at a stroke : and I suppose when you are got together, you speak of your cattle, or of your crops, after which perhaps you talk over a few of your neighbors' faults, and then you brag a little of your own wealth or your own achievements.

Bragwell. Why you seem to know us so well, that any one would think you had been sitting behind the curtain ; and yet you are a little mistaken too ; for I think we have hardly said a word for several of our last Sundays on anything but politics.

Worthy. And do you find that you much improve your Christian charity by that subject ?

Bragwell. Why to be sure we do quarrel till we are very near fighting, that is the worst on't.

Worthy. And then you call names, and swear a little I suppose.

Bragwell. Why when one is contradicted and put in a passion you know, and when people, especially if

they are one's inferiors, won't adopt all one's opinions, flesh and blood can't bear it.

Worthy. And when all your friends are gone home, what becomes of the rest of the evening?

Bragwell. That is just as it happens, sometimes I read the newspaper; and as one is generally most tired on the days one does nothing, I go to bed earlier on Sundays than on other days, that I may be more fit to get up to my business the next morning.

Worthy. So you shorten Sunday as much as you can, by cutting off a bit at both ends, I suppose; for I take it for granted, you lie a little later in the morning.

Bragwell. Come, come, we shan't get through the whole ten to-night, if you stand snubbing one at this rate. You may pass over the fifth; for my father and mother have been dead ever since I was a boy, so I am clear of that scrape.

Worthy. There are, however, many relative duties included in that commandment; unkindness to all kindred is forbidden.

Bragwell. O, if you mean my turning off my nephew Tom, the ploughboy, you must not blame me for that, it was all my wife's fault. He was as good a lad as ever lived to be sure, and my own brother's son; but my wife could not bear that a boy in a carter's frock should be about the house, calling her aunt. We quarrelled like dog and cat about it; and when he was turned away she and I did not speak for a week.

Worthy. Which was a fresh breach of the commandment; a worthy nephew turned out of doors, and a wife not spoken to for a week, are no very convincing proofs of your observance of the fifth commandment.

Bragwell. Well, I long to come to the sixth; for you don't think I commit murder I hope.

Worthy. I am not sure of that.

Bragwell. Murder! what, I kill anybody?

Worthy. Why, the laws of the land, indeed, and the

disgrace attending it, are almost enough to keep any man from actual murder ; let me ask, however, do you never give way to unjust anger, and passion, and revenge ? as for instance, do you never feel your resentment kindle against some of the politicians who contradict you on a Sunday night ? and do you never push your animosity against somebody that has affronted you, further than the occasion can justify ?

Bragwell. Hark'ee, Mr. Worthy, I am a man of substance, and no man shall offend me without my being even with him. So as to injuring a man, if he affronts me first, there's nothing but good reason in that.

Worthy. Very well ! only bear in mind that you wilfully break this commandment, whether you abuse your servant, are angry at your wife, watch for a moment to revenge an injury on your neighbor, or even wreak your passion on a harmless beast ; for you have then the seeds of murder working in your breast ; and if there were no law, no gibbet, to check you, and no fear of disgrace neither, I am not sure where you would stop.

Bragwell. Why, Mr. Worthy, you have a strange way of explaining the commandments ; so you set me down for a murderer, merely because I bear hatred to a man who has done me a hurt, and am glad to do him a like injury in my turn.—I am sure I should want spirit if I did not.

Worthy. I go by the Scripture rule, which says, "he that hateth his brother is a murderer ;" and again, "pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." Besides, Mr. Bragwell, you made it a part of your boast that you said the Lord's prayer every day, wherein you pray to God to forgive you your trespasses as you forgive them that trespass against you.—If therefore you do not forgive them that trespass against you, in that case you daily pray that your own trespasses may never be forgiven.—Now own the truth ; did you last night lie down in a spirit of forgiveness and charity with the whole world !

Bragwell. Yes, I am in charity with the whole world in general; because the greater part of it has never done me any harm. But I won't forgive old Giles, who broke down my new hedge yesterday for firing.—Giles who used to be so honest!

Worthy. And yet you expect that God will forgive you who have broken down his sacred laws, and have so often robbed him of his right—you have robbed him of the honor due unto his name—you have robbed him of his holy day by doing your own work, and finding your own pleasure in it—you have robbed his poor, particularly in the instance of Giles, by withholding from them, as overseer, such assistance as should prevent their being driven to the sin of stealing.

Bragwell. Why, you are now charging me with other men's sins as well as my own.

Worthy. Perhaps the sins which we cause other men to commit, through injustice, inconsideration, and evil example, may dreadfully swell the sum of our responsibility in the great day of account.

Bragwell. Well, come let us make haste and get through these commandments. The next is, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Thank God, neither I nor my family can be said to break the seventh commandment.

Worthy. Here again, remember how Christ himself hath said, "whoso looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart." These are no farfetched expressions of mine, Mr. Bragwell, they are the words of Jesus Christ. I hope you will not charge him with having carried things too far; for if you do, you charge him with being mistaken in the religion he taught; and this can only be accounted for, by supposing him an impostor.

Bragwell. Why, upon my word, Mr. Worthy, I don't like these sayings of his which you quote upon me so often, and that is the truth of it, and I can't say I feel much disposed to believe them.

Worthy. I hope you believe in Jesus Christ. I hope you believe that creed of yours, which you also boasted of repeating so regularly.

Bragwell. Well, well, I'll believe anything you say, rather than stand quarrelling with you.

Worthy. I hope then, you will allow, that since it is adultery to look at a woman with even an irregular thought, it follows from the same rule, that all immodest dress in your daughters, or indecent jests and double meanings in yourself; all loose songs or novels; and all diversions also which have a like dangerous tendency, are forbidden by the seventh commandment; for it is most plain from what Christ has said, that it takes in not only the act, but the inclination, the desire, the indulged imagination; the act is only the last and highest degree of any sin; the topmost round, as it were, of a ladder, to which all the lower rounds are only as so many steps and stages.

Bragwell. Strict indeed! Mr. Worthy; but let us go on to the next; you won't pretend to say *I steal*; Mr. Bragwell, I trust, was never known to rob on the highway, to break open his neighbor's house, or to use false weights or measures.

Worthy. No, nor have you ever been under any temptation to do it, and yet there are a thousand ways of breaking the eighth commandment besides actual stealing. For instance do you never hide the faults of the goods you sell, and heighten the faults of those you buy? Do you never take advantage of an ignorant dealer, and ask more for a thing than it is worth? Do you never turn the distressed circumstances of a man who has something to sell, to your own unfair benefit; and thus act as unjustly by him as if you had stolen? Do you never cut off a shilling from a workman's wages, under the pretence which your conscience can't justify? Do you never pass off an unsound horse for a sound one? Do you never conceal the real rent of your estate from the overseers, and thereby rob the poor-rates of their legal due?

Bragwell. Pooh ! these things are done every day. I shan't go to set up for being better than my neighbors in these sort of things ; these little matters will pass muster—I don't set up for a reformer—If I am as good as the rest of my neighbors, no man can call me to account, I am not worse, I trust, and don't pretend to be better.

Worthy. You must be tried hereafter at the bar of God, and not by a jury of your fellow creatures ; and the Scriptures are given us, in order to show by what rule we shall be judged. How many or how few do as you do, is quite aside from the question ; Jesus Christ has even told us to strive to enter in the *strait* gate ; so that we ought rather to take fright, from our being like the common run of people, than to take comfort from our being so.

Bragwell. Come, I don't like all this close work—it makes a man feel I don't know how—I don't find myself so happy as I did—I don't like this fishing in troubled waters—I'm as merry as the day is long when I let these things alone.—I'm glad we are got to the ninth. But I suppose I shall be lugged in there too, head and shoulders. Any one now who did not know me, would really think I was a great sinner, by your way of putting things : I don't bear false witness however.

Worthy. You mean, I suppose, you would not swear away any man's life falsely before a magistrate, but do you take equal care not to slander or backbite him ? Do you never represent a good action of a man you have quarrelled with, as if it were a bad one ? or do you never make a bad one worse than it is, by your manner of telling it ? Even when you invent no false circumstances, do you never give such a color to those you relate, as to leave a false impression on the mind of the hearers ? Do you never twist a story so as to make it tell a little better for yourself, and a little worse for your neighbor, than truth and justice warrant ?

Bragwell. Why, as to that matter, all this is only natural.

Worthy. Ay, much too natural to be right, I doubt. Well, now we are got to the last of the commandments.

Bragwell. Yes, I have run the gauntlet finely through them all; you will bring me in guilty here, I suppose, for the pleasure of going through with it; for you condemn without judge or jury, Master Worthy.

Worthy. The culprit, I think has hitherto pleaded guilty to the evidence brought against him. The tenth commandment, however, goes to the root and principle of evil, it dives to the bottom of things; this command checks the first rising of sin in the heart; teaches us to strangle it in the birth, as it were, before it breaks out in those acts which are forbidden: as, for instance, every man covets before he proceeds to steal; nay, many covet, knowing they can do it with impunity, who dare not steal, lest they should suffer for it.

Bragwell. Why, look'ee, Mr. Worthy, I don't understand these new-fashioned explanations; one should not have a grain of sheer goodness left, if everything one does is to be fritted away at this rate. I am not, I own, quite so good as I thought, but if what you say were true, I should be so miserable, that I should not know what to do with myself. Why, I tell you, all the world may be said to break the commandments at this rate.

Worthy. Very true. All the world, and I myself also, are but too apt to break them, if not in the letter at least in the spirit of them. Why then all the world are (as the Scripture expresses it) "guilty before God." And if guilty, they should own they are guilty, and not stand up and justify themselves, as you do, Mr. Bragwell.

Bragwell. Well, according to my notion, I am a

very honest man, and honesty is the sum and substance of all religion, say I.

Worthy. All truth, honesty, justice, order, and obedience grow out of the Christian religion. The true Christian acts, at all times, and on all occasions, from the pure and spiritual principle of love to God and Christ. On this principle, he is upright in his dealings, true to his word, kind to the poor, helpful to the oppressed. In short, if he truly loves God, he *must* do justice, and *can't help* loving mercy, Christianity is a uniform consistent thing. It does not allow us to make up for the breach of one part of God's law, by our strictness in observing another. There is no sponge in one duty, that can wipe out the spot of another sin.

Bragwell. Well, but at this rate, I should be always puzzling and blundering, and should never know for certain whether I was right or not; whereas I am now quite satisfied with myself, and have no doubts to torment me.

Worthy. One way of knowing whether we really desire to obey the whole law of God is this; when we find we have as great a regard to that part of it, the breach of which does not touch our own interest, as to that part which does. For instance, a man robs me; I am in a violent passion with him, and when it is said to me, doest thou well to be angry? I answer, I do well. *Thou shalt not steal*, is a law of God, and this fellow has broken that law. Ay, but says conscience, 'tis *thy own property* which is in question. He has broken *thy* hedge, he has stolen *thy* sheep, he has taken *thy* purse. Art thou therefore sure whether it is his violation of thy property, or of God's law which provokes thee? I will put a second case: I hear another swear most grievously—or I meet him coming drunk out of an alehouse; or I find him singing a loose profane song. If I am not as much grieved for this blasphemer, or this drunkard, as I was for this robber; if I do not take the same

pains to bring him to a sense of his sin, which I did to bring the robber to justice, "how dwelleth the love of God in me?" Is it not clear that I value my own sheep more than God's commandments? That I prize my purse more than I love my Maker? In short, whenever I find out that I am more jealous for my own property than for God's law; more careful about my own reputation than *his* honor, I always suspect I am got upon wrong ground, and that even my right actions are not proceeding from a right principle.

Bragwell. Why, what in the world would you have me do? It would distract me, if I must run up every little action to its spring, in this manner.

Worthy. You must confess that your sins *are* sins. You must not merely call them sins, while you see no guilt in them; but you must confess them so as to hate and detest them; so as to be habitually humbled under the sense of them; so as to trust for salvation not in your freedom from them, but in the mercy of a Savior; and so as to make it the chief business of your life to contend against them, and in the main to forsake them. And remember, that if you seek for a deceitful gayety, rather than a well grounded cheerfulness; if you prefer a false security to final safety, and now go away to your cattle and your farm, and dismiss the subject from your thoughts, lest it should make you uneasy, I am not sure that this simple discourse may not appear against you at the day of account, as a fresh proof that you "loved darkness rather than light," and so increase your condemnation.

Mr. Bragwell was more affected than he cared to own. He went to bed with less spirits and more humility than usual. He did not, however, care to let Mr. Worthy see the impression which it had made upon him; but at parting next morning, he shook him by the hand more cordially than usual, and made him promise to return his visit in a short time.

III.—THE VISIT RETURNED.

MR. BRAGWELL, when he returned home from his visit to Mr. Worthy, as recorded in the second part of this history, found that he was not quite so happy as he had formerly been. The discourses of Mr. Worthy had broken in not a little on his comfort. And he began to suspect that he was not so completely in the right as his vanity had led him to believe. He seemed also to feel less satisfaction in the idle gentility of his own daughters, since he had been witness to the simplicity, modesty, and usefulness of those of Mr. Worthy. And he could not help seeing that the vulgar violence of his wife did not produce so much family happiness at home, as the humble piety and quiet diligence of Mrs. Worthy produced in the house of his friend.

Happy would it have been for Mr. Bragwell, if he had followed up those new convictions of his own mind, which would have led him to struggle against the power of evil principles in himself, and to have controlled the force of evil habits in his family. But his convictions were just strong enough to make him uneasy under his errors, without driving him to reform them. The slight impression soon wore off, and he fell back into his old practices. Still his esteem for Mr. Worthy was not at all abated by the plain dealing of that honest friend. It is true, he dreaded his piercing eye: he felt that his example held out a constant reproof to himself. Yet such is the force of early affection and rooted reverence, that he longed to see him at his house. This desire, indeed, as is commonly the case, was made up of mixed motives. He wished for the pleasure of his friend's company; he longed for that favorite triumph of a vulgar mind, an opportunity of showing him his riches; and he thought it would raise his credit in the world to have a man of Mr. Worthy's character at his house.

Mr. Bragwell, it is true, still went on with the same

eagerness in gaining money, and the same ostentation in spending it. But though he was as covetous as ever, he was not quite so sure that it was right to be so. While he was actually engaged abroad indeed, in transactions with his dealers, he was not very scrupulous about the means by which he *got* his money; and while he was indulging in festivity with his friends at home, he was easy enough as to the manner in which he *spent* it. But a man can neither be making bargains, nor making feasts always; there must be some intervals between these two great objects for which worldly men may be said to live; and in some of these intervals the most worldly form perhaps some random plans of amendment. And though many a one may say in the fulness of enjoyment, "Soul, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry;" yet hardly any man, perhaps, allows himself to say, even in the most secret moments, I will *never* retire from business—I will *never* repent—I will *never* think of death—Eternity shall *never* come into my thoughts. The most that such a one probably ventures to say is, I need not repent *yet*; I will continue such a sin a little longer; it will be time enough to think on the next world when I am no longer fit for the business or the pleasures of this.

Such was the case with Bragwell. He set up in his mind a general distant sort of resolution, that *some years hence*, when he should be a *few years older*, a *few* thousands richer; when a few more of his *present schemes should be completed*, he would then think of altering his course of life. He would then certainly set about spending a religious old age; he would reform some practices in his dealings, or, perhaps, quit business entirely; he would think about reading good books, and when he had completed such a purchase, he would even begin to give something to the poor; but at present he really had little to spare for charity. The very reason why he should have given more was just the cause he assigned for not giv-

ing at all, namely the *hardness of the times*. The true grand source of charity, self-denial, never come into his head. *Spend less* that you may *save* more, he would have thought a shrewd maxim enough. But *spend less* that you may *spare* more, never entered into his book of proverbs.

At length the time came when Mr. Worthy had promised to return his visit. It was indeed a little hastened by notice that Mr. Bragwell would have in the course of the week, a piece of land to sell by auction; and though Mr. Worthy believed the price was likely to be above his pocket, yet he knew it was an occasion which would be likely to bring the principal farmers of that neighborhood together, some of whom he wanted to meet. And it was on this occasion that Mr. Bragwell prided himself, that he should show his neighbors so sensible a man as his dear friend Mr. Worthy.

Worthy arrived at his friend's house on the Saturday, time enough to see the house, and garden, and grounds of Mr. Bragwell by daylight. He saw with pleasure (for he had a warm and generous heart) those evident signs of his friend's prosperity; but as he was a man of sober mind, and was a most exact dealer in truth, he never allowed his tongue the license of inmodest commendation, which he used to say either savored of flattery or envy. Indeed he never rated mere worldly things so highly as to bestow upon them undue praise. His calm approbation somewhat disappointed the vanity of Mr. Bragwell, who could not help secretly suspecting that his friend, as good a man as he was, was not quite free from envy. He felt, however, very much inclined to forgive this jealousy, which he feared the sight of his ample property, and handsome habitation must naturally awaken in the mind of a man whose own possessions were so inferior. He practised the usual trick of ordinary and vulgar minds, that of pretending himself to find some fault with those things which were particularly de-

serving praise, when he found Worthy disposed to pass them over in silence.

When they came in to supper, he affected to talk of the comforts of Mr. Worthy's *little* parlor, by way of calling his attention to his own large one. He repeated the word *snug*, as applied to everything at Mr. Worthy's, with the plain design to make comparisons favorable to his own more ample domains. He contrived, as he passed by his chair, by a seeming accident, to push open the door of a large beaufet in the parlor, in which all the finery was most ostentatiously set out to view. He protested with a look of satisfaction which belied his words, that for his part he did not care a farthing for all this trumpery; and then smiling and rubbing his hands, added with an air of no small importance, what a good thing it is though, for people of substance, that the tax on plate is taken off. You are a happy man, Mr. Worthy; you do not feel these things; tax or no tax, it is all the same to you. He took care during this speech, by a cast of his eye to direct Mr. Worthy's attention to a great profusion of the brightest cups, salvers, and tankards, and other shining ornaments, which crowded the beaufet. Mr. Worthy gravely answered Mr. Bragwell, it was indeed a tax which could not affect so plain a man as myself: but as it fell on a mere luxury, and therefore could not hurt the poor, I was always sorry that it could not be made productive enough to be continued. A man in my middling situation, who is contented with a good glass of beer, poured from a handsome earthen mug, the glass, the mug, and the beer, all of English manufacture, will be but little disturbed at taxes on plate or on wine; but he will regret, as I do, that many of these taxes are so much evaded, that new taxes are continually brought on to make up the deficiencies of the old.

During supper the young ladies sat in disdainful silence, not deigning to bestow the smallest civility on so plain a man as Mr. Worthy. They left the

room with their mamma as soon as possible, being impatient to get away to ridicule their father's old-fashioned friend at full liberty.

Christmas Merry-making; exemplifying the effects of modern education in a farmhouse.

As soon as they were gone, Mr. Worthy asked Bragwell how his family comforts stood, and how his daughters, who, he said, were really fine young women, went on. "O, as to that," replied Bragwell, "pretty much like other men's handsome daughters, I suppose, that is, worse and worse. I really begin to apprehend that their fantastical notions have gained such a head, that after all the money I have scraped together, I shall never get them well married.

"Betsey has just lost as good an offer as any girl could desire; young Wilson, an honest substantial grazier as any in the country. He not only knows everything proper for his station, but is pleasing in his behavior, and a pretty scholar into the bargain; he reads history-books and voyages of a winter's evening, to his infirm father, instead of going to the card-assembly in our town; he neither likes drinking nor sporting, and is a sort of a favorite with our parson; because he takes in the weekly numbers of a fine Bible with cuts, and subscribes to the Sunday-school, and makes a fuss about helping the poor; and sets up soup-shops, and sells bacon at an underprice, and gives odd bits of ground to his laborers to help them in these dear times, as they call them; but I think they are good times for us, Mr. Worthy.

"Well, for all this, Betsey only despised him, and laughed at him; but as he is both handsome, and rich, I thought she might come round at last; and so I invited him to come and stay a day or two at Christmas, when we have always a little sort of merry-making here. But it would not do. He scorned to talk that palavering stuff which she has been used to in the marble-covered books I told you of. He told her, in-

deed, that it would be the happiness of his heart to live with her ; which I own I thought was as much as could be expected of any man. But miss had no notion of marrying any one who was only desirous of living with her. No, no, forsooth, her lover must declare himself ready to die for her, which honest Wilson was not such a fool as to offer to do. In the afternoon, however, he got a little into her favor by making out a rebus or two in the Lady's Diary ; and she condescended to say, she did not think Mr. Wilson had been so good a scholar ; but he soon spoilt all again. We had a little dance in the evening. The young man, though he had not much taste for those sort of gambols, yet thought he could foot it a little in the old-fashioned way. So he asked Betsey to be his partner. But when he asked what dance they should call, miss drew up her head, and in a strange gibberish, said she should dance nothing but a *Menuet de la Cour*, and ordered him to call it. Wilson stared, and honestly told her she must call it herself ; for he could neither spell nor pronounce such outlandish words, nor assist in such an outlandish performance. I burst out a laughing, and told him, I supposed it something like questions and commands ; and if so, that was much merrier than dancing. Seeing her partner standing stock still, and not knowing how to get out of the scrape, the girl began by herself, and fell to swimming, and sinking, and capering, and flourishing, and posturing, for all the world just like the man on the slack rope at our fair. But seeing Wilson standing like a stuck pig, and we all laughing at her, she resolved to wreak her malice upon him ; so, with a look of rage and disdain, she advised him to go down country bumpkin, with the dairy maid, who would make a much fitter partner, as well as wife, for him, than she could do.

“‘I am quite of your mind, miss,’ said he, with more spirit than I thought was in him ; ‘you may make a good partner for a dance, but you would make a sad

one to go through life with. I will take my leave of you, miss, with this short story. I had lately a pretty large concern in hay-jobbing, which took me to London. I waited a good while in the Hay-Market for my dealer, and, to pass away the time, I stepped into a sort of foreign singing play-house there, where I was grieved to the heart to see young women painted and dizen'd out, and capering away just as you have been doing. I thought it bad enough in them, and wondered the quality could be entertained with such indecent mummery. But little did I think to meet with the same paint, finery, and posturing tricks in a farmhouse. I will never marry a woman who despises me, nor the station in which I should place her, and so I take my leave.'—Poor girl, how she *was* provoked! to be publicly refused, and turned off, as it were, by a grazier! But it was of use to some of the other girls, who have not held up their heads quite so high since, nor painted quite so red, but have condescended to speak to their equals.

“But how I run on! I forget it is Saturday night, and that I ought to be paying my workmen, who are all waiting for me without.”

Saturday Night; or the Workmen's Wages.

As soon as Mr. Bragwell had done paying his men, Mr. Worthy, who was always ready to extract something useful from accidental circumstances, said to him, “I have made it a habit, and I hope not an unprofitable one, of trying to turn to some moral use, not only all the events of daily life, but all the employments of it too. And though it occurs so often, I hardly know one that sets me thinking more seriously than the ordinary business you have been discharging.” “Ay,” said Bragwell, “it sets me thinking too, and seriously, as you say, when I observe how much the price of wages is increased.”—Yes, yes, you are ready enough to think of that,” said Worthy, “but you say not a word of how much the value of your land is in-

creased, and that the more you pay, the more you can afford to pay. But the thoughts I spoke of are quite of another cast.

“When I call in my laborers, on a Saturday night, to pay them, it often brings to my mind the great and general day of account, when I, and you, and all of us, shall be called to our grand and awful reckoning, when we shall go to receive *our* wages, master and servants, farmer and laborer. When I see that one of my men has failed of the wages he should have received, because he has been idling at a fair; another has lost a day by a drinking-bout, a third confesses that, though he had task-work, and might have earned still more, yet he has been careless, and has not his full pay to receive; this, I say, sometimes sets me on thinking whether I also have made the most of my time. And when I come to pay even the more diligent, who have worked all the week, when I reflect that even these have done no more than it was their duty to do, I can not help saying to myself, night is come, Saturday night is come. No repentance, or diligence on the part of these poor men can now make a bad week’s work good. This week has gone into eternity. To-morrow is the season of rest; working time is over. ‘There is no knowledge nor device in the grave.’ My life also will soon be swallowed up in eternity; soon the space allotted me for diligence, for labor, will be over. Soon will the grand question be asked, ‘What hast thou done?—Give an account of thy stewardship. Didst thou use thy working days to the end for which they were given?’ With some such thoughts I commonly go to bed, and they help to quicken me to a keener diligence for the next week.”

Sunday in Mr. Bragwell’s Family.

Mr. Worthy had been for so many years used to the sober ways of his own well-ordered family, that he greatly disliked to pass a Sunday in any house of which religion was not the governing principle. Indeed, he

commonly ordered his affairs, and regulated his journeys with an eye to this object. "To pass a Sunday in an irreligious family," said he, "is always unpleasant, often unsafe.—I seldom find I can do them any good, and they may perhaps do me some harm. At least, I am giving a sanction to their manner of passing it, if I pass it in the same manner. If I reprove them, I subject myself to the charge of singularity, and of being righteous over-much; if I do *not* reprove them, I confirm and strengthen them in evil. And whether I reprove them or not, I certainly partake of their guilt, if I spend it as they do."

He had, however, so strong a desire to be useful to Mr. Bragwell, that he at length determined to break through his common practice, and pass the Sunday at his house. Mr. Worthy was surprised to find that though the church bell was going, the breakfast was not ready, and expressed his wonder how this could be the case in so industrious a family. Bragwell made some awkward excuses. He said his wife worked her servants so hard all the week, that even she, as notable as she was, a little relaxed from the strictness of her demands on Sunday mornings; and he owned that in a general way, no one was up early enough for church. He confessed that his wife commonly spent the morning in making puddings, pies, syllabubs, and cakes, to last through the week; as Sunday was the only leisure time she and her maids had. Mr. Worthy soon saw an uncommon bustle in the house. All hands were busy. It was nothing but baking, and boiling, and stewing, and frying, and roasting, and running, and scolding, and eating. The boy was kept from church to clean the plate, the man to gather the fruit, the mistress to make the cheese-cakes, the maids to dress the dinner, and the young ladies to dress themselves.

The truth was, Mrs. Bragwell, who had heard much of the order and good management of Mr. Worthy's family, but who looked down with disdain upon them

as far less rich than herself, was resolved to indulge her vanity on the present occasion. She was determined to be even with Mrs. Worthy, in whose praises Bragwell had been so loud, and felt no small pleasure in the hope of making her guest uneasy, in comparing her with his own wife, when he should be struck dumb with the display both of her skill and her wealth. Mr. Worthy was indeed struck to behold as large a dinner as he had been used to see at a justice's meeting. He, whose frugal and pious wife had accustomed him only to such a plain Sunday's dinner as could be dressed without keeping any one from church, when he surveyed the loaded table of his friend, instead of feeling that envy which the grand preparations were meant to raise, felt nothing but disgust at the vanity of his friend's wife, mixed with much thankfulness for the piety and simplicity of his own.

After having made the dinner wait a long time, the Miss Bragwells marched in, dressed as if they were going to the assize-ball; they looked very scornfully at having been so hurried; though they had been dressing ever since they got up, and their fond father, when he saw them so fine, forgave all their impertinence, and cast an eye of triumph on Mr. Worthy, who felt he had never loved his own humble daughters so well as at that moment.

In the afternoon, the whole party went to church. To do them justice, it was indeed their common practice once a day, when the weather was good, and the road was neither dusty nor dirty, when the minister did not begin too early, when the young ladies had not been disappointed of their bonnets on the Saturday night, and when they no smart company in the house, who rather wished to stay at home. When this last was the case, which, to say the truth, happened pretty often, it was thought a piece of good manners to conform to the humor of the guests. Mr. Bragwell had this day forborne to ask any of his usual company; well knowing that their vain and worldly conversation

would only serve to draw on him some new reprimand from his friend.

Mrs. Bragwell and her daughters picked up, as usual, a good deal of acquaintance at church. Many compliments passed, and much of the news of the week was retailed before the service began. They waited with impatience for the reading the lessons as a licensed season for whispering, and the subject begun during the lessons, was finished while they were singing the psalms. The young ladies made an appointment for the afternoon with a friend in the next pew, while their mamma took the opportunity of inquiring aloud, the character of a dairy-maid, which she observed with a compliment to her own good management, would save time on a week-day.

Mr. Worthy, who found himself quite in a new world, returned home with his friend alone. In the evening he ventured to ask Bragwell, if he did not, on a Sunday night, at least, make it a custom to read and pray with his family. Bragwell told him, he was sorry to say he had no family at home, else he should like to do it for the sake of example. But as his servants worked hard all the week, his wife was of opinion that they should then have a little holyday. Mr. Worthy pressed it home upon him, whether the utter neglect of his servants' principles was not likely to make a heavy article in his final account: and asked him if he did not believe that the too general liberty of meeting together, jaunting, and diverting themselves, on Sunday evenings, was not often found to produce the worst effects on the morals of servants and the good order of families? "I put it to your conscience," said he, "Mr. Bragwell, whether Sunday, which was meant as a blessing and a benefit, is not, as it is commonly kept, turned into the most mischievous part of the week, by the selfish kindness of masters, who, not daring to set their servants about any public work, allot them that day to follow their own devices, that they themselves may with more rigor refuse them a

little indulgence, and a reasonable holyday, in the working part of the week, which a good servant has now and then a fair right to expect. Those masters who will give them half, or all the Lord's day, will not spare them a single hour of a working day. *Their work must be done ; God's work may be let alone.*"

Mr. Bragwell owned that Sunday had produced many mischiefs in his own family. That the young men and maids, having no eye upon them, frequently went to improper places with other servants, turned adrift like themselves. That in these parties the poor girls were too frequently led astray, and the men got to public houses and fives-playing. But it was none of his business to watch them. His family only did as others do ; indeed it was his wife's concern ; and she was so good a manager on other days, that she would not spare them an hour to visit a sick father or mother ; it would be hard, she said, if they might not have Sunday afternoon to themselves, and she could not blame them for making the most of it. Indeed, she was so indulgent in this particular, that she often excused the men from going to church, that they might serve the beasts, and the maids, that they might get the milking done before the holyday part of the evening came on. She would not indeed hear of any competition between doing *her* work and taking their pleasure ; but when the difference lay between their going to church and taking their pleasure, he *must* say that for his wife, she always inclined to the good-natured side of the question. She is strict enough in keeping them sober because drunkenness is a costly sin ; and to do her justice she does not care how little they sin at her expense.

"Well," said Mr. Worthy, "I always like to examine both sides fairly, and to see the different effects of opposite practices ; now, which plan produces the greatest share of comfort to the master, and of profit to the servants in the long run ? Your servants, 'tis likely, are very much attached to you ; and very fond

of living where they get their own way in so great a point."

"O, as to that," replied Bragwell, "you are quite out. My house is a scene of discord, mutiny, and discontent. And though there is not a better manager in England than my wife, yet she is always changing her servants; so that every quarter-day is a sort of jail delivery at my house; and when they go off, as they often do, at a moment's warning, to own the truth, I often give them money privately, that they may not carry my wife before the justice to get their wages."

"I see," said Mr. Worthy, "that all your worldly compliances do not procure you even worldly happiness. As to my own family, I take care to let them see that their pleasure is bound up with their duty, and that what they may call my strictness, has nothing in view but their safety and happiness. By this means I commonly gain their love, as well as secure their obedience. I know, that with all my care, I am liable to be disappointed, 'from the corruption that is in the world through sin.' But whenever this happens, so far from encouraging me in remissness, it only serves to quicken my zeal. If by God's blessing, my servant turns out a good Christian, I have been an humble instrument in his hand of saving a soul committed to my charge."

Mrs. Bragwell came home, but brought only one of her daughters with her, the other, she said, had given them the slip, and was gone with a young friend, and would not return for a day or two. Mr. Bragwell was greatly displeased; as he knew that young friend had but a slight character, and kept bad acquaintances. Mrs. Bragwell came in, all hurry and bustle, saying, "if her family did not go to bed with the lamb on Sundays, when they had nothing to do, how could they rise with the lark on Mondays, when so much was to be done."

Mr. Worthy had this night much matter for reflection. "We need not," said he, "go into the great

world to look for dissipation and vanity. We can find both in a farmhouse. 'As for me and my house,' continued he, 'we will serve the Lord' every day, but especially on Sunday. 'It is the day which the Lord hath made; hath made for himself; we will rejoice in it,' and consider the religious use of it, not only as a duty, but as a privilege.'

IV.—PRAYER DISCUSSED IN A MORNING'S RIDE.

It was mentioned in the last part of this history, that the chief reason which had drawn Mr. Worthy to visit his friend just at the present time was, that Mr. Bragwell had a small estate to sell by auction. Mr. Worthy, though he did not think he should be a bidder, wished to be present, as he had business to settle with one or two persons who were expected at the Golden Lion, on that day, and he had put off his visit till he had seen the sale advertised in the county paper.

Mr. Bragwell and Mr. Worthy set out early on the Monday morning, on their way to the Golden Lion, a small inn in a neighboring market town. As they had time before them, they had agreed to ride slowly that they might converse on some useful subject, but here, as usual, they had two opinions about the same thing. Mr. Bragwell's notion of a useful subject was, something by which money was to be got, and a good bargain struck. Mr. Worthy was no less a man of business than his friend. His schemes were wise, and his calculations just; his reputation for integrity and good sense made him the common judge and umpire in his neighbor's affairs, while no one paid a more exact attention to every transaction of his own. But the business of getting money was not with him the first, much less was it the whole concern of the day. He sought in the *first place*, "the kingdom of

God and his righteousness." Every morning when he rose, he remembered that he had a Maker to worship as well as a family to maintain. Religion, however, never made him neglect business, though it sometimes led him to postpone it. He used to say, no man had any reason to expect God's blessing through the day, who did not ask it in the morning ; nor was he likely to spend the day in the fear of God, who did not begin it with his worship. But he had not the less sense, spirit, and activity, when he was among men abroad, because he had first served God at home.

As these two farmers rode along, Mr. Worthy took occasion, from the fineness of the day, and the beauty of the country through which they passed, to turn the discourse to the goodness of God, and our infinite obligations to him. He knew that the transition from thanksgiving to prayer would be natural and easy ; and he therefore, sliding by degrees into that important subject, observed, that secret prayer was a duty of universal obligation, which every man had it in his power to fulfil, and which he seriously believed was the ground-work of all religious practice, and of all devout affections.

Mr. Bragwell felt conscious that he was very negligent and irregular in the performance of this duty ; indeed, he considered it as a mere ceremony, or at least, as a duty which might give way to the slightest temptation of drowsiness at night, or business in the morning. As he knew he did not live in the conscientious performance of this practice, he tried to ward off the subject, knowing what a home way his friend had of putting things. After some evasion, he at last said, "he certainly thought private prayer a good custom, especially for people who have time ; and that those who were sick, or old, or out of business, could not do better ; but that for his part, he believed much of these sort of things was not expected from men in active life."

Worthy. I should think, Mr. Bragwell, that those

who are most exposed to temptations stand most in need of prayer ; now there are few, methinks, who are more exposed to temptation than men in business ; for those must be in most danger, at least from the world, who have most to do with it. And if this be true, ought we not to prepare ourselves in the closet for the trials of the market, the field, and the shop ? It is but putting on our armor before we go out to battle.

Bragwell. For my part, I think example is the whole of religion, and if the master of a family is orderly, and regular, and goes to church, he does everything which can be required of him, and no one has a right to call him to an account for anything more.

Worthy. Give me leave to say, Mr. Bragwell, that highly as I rate a good example, still I must set a good principle above it. I know I must keep good order indeed, for the sake of others ; but I must keep a good conscience for my own sake. To God I owe secret piety, I must therefore pray to him in private.—To my family I owe a Christian example, and for that, among other reasons, I must not fail to go to church.

Bragwell. You are talking, Mr. Worthy, as if I were an enemy to religion. Sir, I am no heathen. Sir, I am a Christian ; I belong to the church ; I go to church ; I always drink prosperity to the church. You yourself, as strict as you are, in never missing it twice a day, are not a warmer friend to the church than I am.

Worthy. That is to say, you know its inestimable value as a political institution ; but you do not seem to know that a man may be very irreligious under the best religious institutions ; and that even the most excellent only furnishes the *means* of being religious, and is no more religion itself than brick and mortar are prayers and thanksgivings. I shall never think, however high their profession, and even however regular their attendance, that those men truly respect the

church, who bring home little of that religion which is taught in it into their own families or their own hearts ; or, who make the whole of Christianity to consist in a mere formal attendance there. Excuse me Mr. Bragwell.

Bragwell. Mr. Worthy, I am persuaded that religion is quite a proper thing for the poor ; and I don't think that the multitude can ever be kept in order without it ; and I am a sort of a politician you know. We *must* have bits, and bridles, and restraints for the vulgar.

Worthy. Your opinion is very just, as far as it goes ; but it does not go far enough, since, it does not go to the root of the evil ; for while you value yourself on the soundness of this principle as a politician, I wish you also to see the reason of it as a Christian ; depend upon it, if religion be good for the community at large, it is equally good for every family ; and what is right for a family is equally right for each individual in it. You have therefore yourself brought the most unanswerable argument why you ought to be religious yourself, by asking how we shall keep others in order without religion. For, believe me, Mr. Bragwell, there is no particular clause to except *you* in the Gospel. There are no exceptions there in favor of any one class of men. The same restraints which are necessary for the people at large, are equally necessary for men of every order, high and low, rich and poor, bond and free, learned and ignorant. If Jesus Christ died for no one particular rank, class, or community, then there is no one rank, class, or community, exempt from the obedience to his laws enjoined by the Gospel. May I ask you, Mr. Bragwell, what is your reason for going to church ?

Bragwell. Sir, I am shocked at your question. How can I avoid doing a thing so customary and so creditable ? Not go to church, indeed ! What do you take me for, Mr. Worthy ? I am afraid you sus-

pect me to be a papist, or a heathen, or of some religion or other that is not Christian.

Worthy. If a foreigner were to hear how violently one set of Christians in this country often speak against another, how earnest would he suppose us all to be in religious matters : and how astonished to discover that many a man has perhaps little other proof to give of the sincerity of his own religion, except the violence with which he hates the religion of another party. It is not *irreligion* which such men hate, but the religion of the man, or the party, whom we are set against : now hatred is certainly no part of the religion of the Gospel. Well, you have told me why you go to church ; now pray tell me, why do you confess there on your bended knees, every Sunday, that “you have erred and strayed from God’s ways ; that there is no health in you ; that you have done what you ought not to do ; and that you are a miserable sinner ?”

Bragwell. Because it is in the Common Prayer Book, to be sure ; a book which I have heard yourself say was written by wise and good men ; the glory of Christianity, the pillars of the protestant church,

Worthy. But have you no other reason ?

Bragwell. No, I can’t say I have.

Worthy. When you repeat that excellent form of confession, do you really feel that you *are* a miserable sinner ?

Bragwell. No, I can’t say I do. But that is no objection to my repeating it : Because it may suit the cause of many who are so. I suppose the good doctors who drew it up, intended that part for wicked people only, such as drunkards, and thieves, and murderers ; for I imagine they could not well contrive to make the same prayer quite suit an honest man and a rogue ; and so I suppose they thought it better to make a good man repeat a prayer which suited a rogue, than to make a rogue repeat a prayer which suited a good man ; and you know it is so customary

for everybody to repeat the general confession, that it can't hurt the credit of the most respectable persons, though every respectable person must know they have no particular concern in it; as they are not sinners.

Worthy. Depend upon it, Mr. Bragwell, those good doctors you speak of, were not quite of your opinion; they really thought that what you call honest men were grievous sinners in a certain sense, and that the best of us stand in need of making that humble confession. Mr. Bragwell, do you believe in the fall of Adam?

Bragwell. To be sure I do, and a sad thing for Adam it was; why, it is in the Bible, is it not? It is one of the prettiest chapters in Genesis. Don't you believe it, Mr. Worthy?

Worthy. Yes, truly I do. But I don't believe it *merely* because I read it in Genesis; though I know, indeed, that I am bound to believe every part of the word of God. But I have still an additional reason for believing in the fall of the first man.

Bragwell. Have you indeed? Now, I can't guess what that can be.

Worthy. Why, my own observation of what is within myself teaches me to believe it. It is not only the third chapter of Genesis which convinces me of the truth of the fall, but also the sinful inclinations which I find in my own heart corresponding with it. This is one of those leading truths of Christianity of which I can never doubt a moment: first, because it is abundantly expressed or implied in Scripture; and next, because the consciousness of the evil nature, I carry about with me confirms the doctrine beyond all doubt. Besides, is it not said in Scripture, that by one man, sin entered into the world, and that "all we, like lost sheep, have gone astray;" that "by one man's disobedience many were made sinners;" and so again in twenty more places that I could tell you of?

Bragwell. Well ; I never thought of this. But is not this a very melancholy sort of doctrine, Mr. Worthy ?

Worthy. It is melancholy, indeed, if we stop here. But while we are deploring this sad truth, let us take comfort from another, that “ As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

Bragwell. Yes ; I remember I thought those very fine words, when I heard them said over my poor father’s grave. But as it was in the burial of the dead, I did not think of taking it to myself ; for I was then young and hearty, and in little danger of dying, and I have been so busy ever since, that I have hardly had time to think of it.

Worthy. And yet the service pronounced at the burial of all who die, is a solemn admonition to all who live. It is there said, as indeed the Scripture says also, “ I am the resurrection and the life ; whosoever *believeth in me* shall never die, but I will raise him up at the last day.” Now do you think you *believe in Christ*, Mr. Bragwell ?

Bragwell. To be sure I do ; why you are always fancying me an atheist.

Worthy. In order to believe in Christ, we must believe first in our own guilt and our own unworthiness ; and when we do this we shall see the use of a Savior, and not till then.

Bragwell. Why, all this is a new way of talking. I can’t say I ever meddled with such subjects before in my life. But now, what do you advise a man to do upon your plan of religion ?

Worthy. Why all this leads me back to the ground from which we set out, I mean the duty of prayer ; for if we believe that we have an evil nature within us, and that we stand in need of God’s grace to help us, and a Savior to redeem us, we shall be led of course to pray for what we so much need ; and without this conviction we shall not be led to pray.

Bragwell. Well, but don’t you think, Mr. Worthy,

that you good folks who make so much of prayer, have lower notions than we have of the wisdom of the Almighty? You think he wants to be informed of the thing you tell him; whereas, I take it for granted that he knows them already, and that, being so good as he is, he will give me everything he sees fit to give me, without my asking it.

Worthy. God, indeed, who knows all things, knows what we want before we ask him; but still has he not said that, "With prayer and supplication we must make known our requests unto him?" Prayer is the way in which God hath said that his favor must be sought. It is the channel through which he has declared it his sovereign will and pleasure that his blessings should be conveyed to us. What ascends up in prayer descends to us again in blessings. It is like the rain which just now fell, and which had been drawn up from the ground in vapors to the clouds before it descended from them to the earth in that refreshing shower. Besides prayer has a good effect on our minds; it tends to excite a right disposition toward God in us, and to keep up a constant sense of our dependance. But above all, it is the way to get the good things we want. "Ask," says the Scripture, "and ye shall receive."

Bragwell. Now, that is the very thing which I was going to deny: for the truth is, men do not always get what they ask; I believe if I could get a good crop for asking it, I would pray oftener than I do.

Worthy. Sometimes, Mr. Bragwell, men "ask and receive not, because they ask amiss;"—"they ask that they may consume it on their lusts." They ask worldly blessings, perhaps, when they should ask spiritual ones. Now, the latter, which are the good things I spoke of, are always granted to those who pray to God for them, though the former are not. I have observed in the case of some worldly things I have sought for, that the grant of my prayer would have caused the misery of my life; so that God

equally consults our good in what he withholds, and in what he bestows.

Bragwell. And yet you continue to pray on I suppose?

Worthy. Certainly; but then I try to mend as to the object of my prayers. I pray for God's blessing and favor, which is better than riches.

Bragwell. You seem very earnest on this subject.

Worthy. To cut the matter short; I ask then, whether prayer is not positively commanded in the Gospel. When this is the case, we can never dispute about the necessity or the duty of a thing, as we may when there is no such command. Here, however, let me just add also, that a man's prayers may be turned into no small use in the way of discovering to him whatever is amiss in his life.

Bragwell. How so, Mr. Worthy?

Worthy. Why, suppose now, you were to try yourself by turning into the shape of a prayer every practice in which you allow yourself. For instance, let the prayer in the morning be a sort of preparation for the deeds of the day, and the prayer at night a sort of retrospection of those deeds. You, Mr. Bragwell, I suspect, are a little inclined to covetousness; excuse me, sir. Now, suppose after you have been during a whole day a little too eager to get rich: suppose, I say, you were to try how it would sound to beg of God at night on your knees, to give you still more money, though you have already so much that you know not what to do with it. Suppose you were to pray in the morning, "O Lord, give me more riches, though those I have are a snare and a temptation to me;" and ask him in the same solemn manner to bless all the grasping means you intend to make use of in the day, to add to your substance?

Bragwell. Mr. Worthy, I have no patience with you for thinking I could be so wicked.

Worthy. Yet to make such a covetous prayer as this is hardly more wicked, or more absurd, than to

lead the life of the covetous, by sinning up to the spirit of that very prayer which you would not have the courage to put into words. Still further observe how it would sound to confess your sins, and pray against them all, except one favorite sin. "Lord, do thou enable me to forsake all my sins, except the love of money;" "In this one thing pardon thy servant." Or, "Do thou enable me to forgive all who have injured me, except old Giles." This you will object against, as a wicked prayer; but if wicked in prayer, it must be wicked in practice. It is even more shocking to make it the language of the heart, or of the life, than of the lips. And yet, because you have been used to see people act thus, and have not been used to hear them pray thus, you are shocked at the one, and not shocked at the other.

Bragwell. Shocked, indeed! Why, at this rate, you would teach one to hate one's self.

Worthy. Hear me out, Mr. Bragwell; you turned your good nephew, Tom Broad, out of doors, you know; you owned to me it was an act of injustice. Now, suppose on the morning of your doing so you had begged of God, in a solemn act of prayer, to prosper the deed of cruelty and oppression, which you intended to commit that day. I see you are shocked at the thought of such a prayer. Well, then, would not hearty prayer have kept you from committing that wicked action? In short, what a life must that be, no act of which you dare beg God to prosper and bless? If once you can bring yourself to believe that it is your bounden duty to pray for God's blessing on your day's work, you will certainly grow careful about passing such a day as you may safely ask his blessing upon. The remark may be carried to sports, diversions, company. A man, who once takes up the serious use of prayer, will soon find himself obliged to abstain from such diversions, occupations, and societies, as he can not reasonably desire that God will bless to him; and thus he will see himself com-

pelled to leave off either the practice or the prayer. Now, Mr. Bragwell, I need not ask you which of the two he that is a real Christian will give up, sinning or praying.

Mr. Bragwell began to feel that he had not the best of the argument, and was afraid he was making no great figure in the eyes of his friend. Luckily, however, he was relieved from the difficulty into which the necessity of making some answer must have brought him, by finding they were come to the end of their little journey : and he never beheld the Bunch of Grapes, which decorated the sign of the Golden Lion, with more real satisfaction.

V.—THE GOLDEN LION.

MR. BRAGWELL and Mr. Worthy alighted at the Golden Lion. It was market-day : the inn, the yard, the town was all alive.—Bragwell was quite in his element. Money, company, and good cheer always set his spirits afloat. He felt himself the principal man in the scene. He had three great objects in view ; the sale of his land ; the letting Mr. Worthy see how much he was looked up to by so many substantial people, and the showing these people what a wise man his most intimate friend, Mr. Worthy was. It was his way to try to borrow a little credit from every person, and everything he was connected with, and by that credit to advance his interest and increase his wealth.

The farmers met in a large room ; and while they were transacting their various concerns, those whose pursuits were the same, naturally herded together. The tanners were drawn to one corner, by the common interest which they took in bark and hides. A useful debate was carrying on at another little table, whether the practice of *sowing* wheat or of *planting*

it were most profitable. Another set were disputing whether horses or oxen were best for ploughs. Those who were concerned in canals, sought the company of other canallers ; while some, who were interested in the new bill for enclosures, wisely looked out for such as knew most about waste lands.

Mr. Worthy was pleased with all these subjects, and picked up something useful on each. It was a saying of his, that most men understood some one thing, and that he who was wise would try to learn from every man something on the subject he best knew ; but Mr. Worthy made a further use of the whole. "What a pity is it," said he, "that Christians are not so desirous to turn their time to good account as men of business are ! When shall we see religious persons as anxious to derive profit from the experience of others as these farmers ? When shall we see them as eager to turn their time to good account ? While I approve these men for not being *slothful in business*, let me improve the hint, by being also *fervent in spirit*."

"The children of this generation are wiser than the children of Light."

When the hurry was a little over, Mr. Bragwell took a turn on the bowling-green. Mr. Worthy followed him, "to ask why the sale of the estate was not brought forward. Let the auctioneer proceed to business," said he ; "the company will be glad to get home by daylight. I speak mostly with a view to others ; for I do not think of being a purchaser myself." "I know it," said Bragwell, "or I would not be such a fool as to let the cat out of the bag. But is it really possible (proceeded he, with a smile of contempt) that you should think, I will sell my estate before dinner ? Mr. Worthy, you are a clever man at books, and such things ; and perhaps can make out an account on paper in a handsomer manner than I can. But I never found much was to be got by fine

writing. As to figures, I can carry enough of them in my head to add, divide, and multiply more money than your learning will ever give you the fingering of. You may beat me at a book, but you are a very child at a bargain. Sell my land before dinner indeed !”

Mr. Worthy was puzzled to guess how a man was to show more wisdom by selling a piece of ground at one hour than another, and desired an explanation. Bragwell felt rather more contempt for his understanding than he had ever done before. “Look’ee, Mr. Worthy,” said he, “I do not think that knowledge is of any use to a man, unless he has sense enough to turn it to account. Men are my books, Mr. Worthy ; and it is by reading, spelling, and putting them together to good purpose, that I have got up in the world. I shall give you a proof of this to-day. These farmers are most of them come to the Lion with a view of purchasing this bit of land of mine, if they should like the bargain. Now, as you know a thing can’t be any great bargain both to the buyer and the seller too, to them and to me, it becomes me as a man of sense, who has the good of his family at heart, to secure the bargain to myself. I would not cheat any man, sir, but I think it fair enough to turn his weakness to my own advantage ; there is no law against that, you know ; and this is the use of one man’s having more sense than another. So, whenever I have a piece of land to sell, I always give a handsome dinner, with plenty of punch and strong beer. We fill up the morning with other business ; and I carefully keep back my talk about the purchase till we have dined. At dinner we have, of course, a slice of politics. This puts most of us into a passion, and you know anger is thirsty. Besides, ‘Church and King’ naturally brings on a good many other toasts. Now, as I am master of the feast, you know it would be shabby in me to save my liquor ; so I push about the glass one way, and the tankard the other, till all my company are as merry as kings. Every man is delight-

ed to see what a fine hearty fellow he has to deal with, and Mr. Bragwell receives a thousand compliments. By this time they have gained as much in good humor as they have lost in sober judgment, and this is the proper moment for setting the auctioneer to work, and this I commonly do to such good purpose, that I go home with my purse a score or two pounds heavier than if they had not been warmed by their dinner. In the morning men are cool and suspicious, and have all their wits about them ; but a cheerful glass cures all distrust. And, what is lucky, I add to my credit as well as my pocket, and get more praise for my dinner than blame for my bargain."

Mr. Worthy was struck with the absurd vanity which could tempt a man to own himself guilty of an unfair action for the sake of showing his wisdom. He was beginning to express his disapprobation, when they were told dinner was on table. They went in, and were soon seated. All was mirth and good cheer. Everybody agreed that no one gave such hearty dinners as Mr. Bragwell. Nothing was pitiful where he was master of the feast. Bragwell, who looked with pleasure on the excellent dinner before him, and enjoyed the good account to which he should turn it, heard their praises with delight, and cast an eye on Worthy, as much as to say who is the wise man now. Having a mind, for his own credit, to make his friend talk, he turned to him, saying, "Mr. Worthy, I believe no people in the world enjoy life more than men of our class. We have money and power, we live on the fat of the land, and have as good a right to gentility as the best."

"As to gentility, Mr. Bragwell," replied Worthy, "I am not sure that this is among the wisest of our pretensions. But I will say, that ours is a creditable and respectable business. In ancient times, farming was the employment of princes and patriarchs ; and, now-a-days, an honest, humane, sensible, English yeoman, I will be bold to say, is not only a very use-

ful, but an honorable character. But then, he must not merely think of *enjoying life* as you call it, but he must think of living up to the great ends for which he was sent into the world. A wealthy farmer not only has it in his power to live well, but to do much good. He is not only the father of his own family, but his workmen, his dependants, and the poor at large, especially in these hard time. He has it in his power to raise into credit all the parish offices which have fallen into disrepute by getting into bad hands; and he can convert, what have been falsely thought mean offices, into very important ones, by his just and Christian like manner of filling them. An upright juryman, a conscientious constable, an humane overseer, an independent elector, an active superintendent of a workhouse, a just arbitrator in public disputes, a kind counsellor in private troubles; such a one, I say, fills up a station in society no less necessary, and, as far as it reaches, scarcely less important than that of a magistrate, a sheriff of a county, or even a member of parliament. That can never be a slight or degrading office, on which the happiness of a whole parish may depend."

Bragwell, who thought the good sense of his friend reflected credit on himself, encouraged Worthy to go on, but he did it in his own vain way. "Ay, very true, Mr. Worthy," said he, "you are right; a leading man in our class ought to be looked up to as an example, as you say; in order to which, he should do things handsomely and liberally, and not grudge himself, or his friends, anything; casting an eye of complacency on the good dinner he had provided." "True," replied Mr. Worthy, "he should be an example of simplicity, sobriety, and plainness of manners." "But he will do well," added he, "not to affect a frothy gentility, which will set but clumsily upon him. If he has money, let him spend prudently, lay up moderately for his children, and give liberally to the poor. But let him rather seek to dignify his

own station by his virtues, than to get above it by his vanity. If he acts thus, then, as long as his country lasts, a farmer of England will be looked upon as one of its most valuable members ; nay more, by this conduct, he may contribute to make England last the longer. The riches of the farmer, corn and cattle, are the true riches of a nation ; but let him remember, that though corn and cattle *enrich* a country, nothing but justice, integrity, and religion, can *preserve* it."

Here one of the company, who was known to be a man of loose principles, and who seldom went to public worship, said he had no objection to religion, and was always ready to testify his regard to it by drinking church and king. On this Mr. Worthy remarked, that "he was afraid that too many contented themselves with making this toast include the whole of their religion, if not of their loyalty. It is with real sorrow," continued he, "that I am compelled to observe, that though there are numberless honorable instances to the contrary, yet I have seen more contempt and neglect of Christianity in men of our calling, than in almost any other. They too frequently hate the rector on account of his tithes, to which he has as good a right as they have to their farms, and the curate on account of his poverty ; but the truth is, religion itself is often the concealed object of their dislike. I know too many, who, while they affect a violent outward zeal for the church, merely because they conceive its security to be somehow connected with their own political advantages, yet prove the hollowness of their attachment, by showing little regard to its ministers, and less to its ordinances."

Young Wilson, the worthy grazier, whom Miss Bragwell turned off because he did not understand French dances, thanked Mr. Worthy for what he had said, and hoped he should be the better for it as long as he lived, and desired his leave to be better acquainted. Most of the others declared they had never heard a finer speech, and then, as is usual, proceeded to

show the good effect it had on them, by loose conversation, hard drinking, and whatever could counteract all that Worthy had been saying.

Mr. Worthy was much concerned to hear Mr. Bragwell, after dinner, whisper to the waiter, to put less and less water into every fresh bowl of punch. This was his old way ; if the time they had to sit was long, then the punch was to be weaker, as he saw no good in wasting money to make it stronger than the time required. But if time pressed, then the strength was to be increased in due proportion, as a small quantity must then intoxicate them as much in a short time as would be required of a greater quantity had the time been longer. This was one of Mr. Bragwell's nice calculations ; and this was the sort of skill on which he so much valued himself.

At length the guests were properly primed for business ; just in that convenient stage of intoxication which makes men warm and rash, yet keeps short of that absolute drunkenness, which disqualifies for business, the auctioneer set to work. All were bidders, and, if possible, all would have been purchasers ; so happily had the feast and the punch operated. They bid on with a still increasing spirit, till they got so much above the value of the land, that Bragwell with a wink and a whisper, said : " Who would sell his land fasting ? Eh ! Worthy ? " At length the estate was knocked down, at a price very far above its worth.

As soon as it was sold, Bragwell again said softly to Worthy, " Five from fifty and there remain forty-five. ' The dinner and drink won't cost me five pounds, and I have got fifty more than the land was worth. Spend a shilling to gain a pound ! This is what I call practical arithmetic, Mr. Worthy. "

Mr. Worthy was glad to get out of this scene ; and seeing that his friend was quite sober, he resolved as they rode home to deal plainly with him. Bragwell had found out, among his calculations, that there

were some sins which could only be committed, by a prudent man, one at a time. For instance, he knew that a man could not well get rich and get drunk at the same moment; so that he used to practise one first, and the other after; but he had found out that some vices made very good company together; thus, while he had watched himself in drinking, lest he should become as unfit to sell as his guests were to buy, he had indulged, without measure, in the good dinner he had provided. Mr. Worthy, I say, seeing him able to bear reason, rebuked him for this day's proceedings with some severity. Bragwell bore his reproofs with that sort of patience which arises from an opinion of one's own wisdom, accompanied by a recent flush of prosperity. He behaved with that gay good humor, which grows out of united vanity and good fortune. "You are too squeamish, Mr. Worthy," said he, "I have done nothing discreditable. These men came with their eyes open. There is no compulsion used. They are free to bid or to let it alone. I make them welcome, and I shall not be thought a bit the worse of by them to-morrow, when they are sober. Others do it besides me, and I shall never be ashamed of anything as long as I have custom on my side."

Worthy. I am sorry, Mr. Bragwell, to hear you support such practices by such arguments. There is not, perhaps, a more dangerous snare to the souls of men than is to be found in that word custom. It is a word invented to reconcile corruption with credit, and sin with safety. But no custom, no fashion, no combination of men, to set up a false standard can ever make a wrong action right. That a thing is often done, is so far from a proof of its being right, that it is the very reason which will set a thinking man to inquire if it be not really wrong, lest he should be following, "a multitude to do evil." Right is right, though only one man in a thousand pursues it; and wrong will be for ever wrong, though it be the allowed practice of

the other nine hundred and ninety-nine. If this shameful custom be really common, which I can hardly believe, that is a fresh reason why a conscientious man should set his face against it. And I must go so far as to say (you will excuse me, Mr. Bragwell) that I see no great difference, in the eye of conscience, whatever there may be in the eye of the law, between your making a man first lose his reason, and then getting fifty guineas out of his pocket, *because* he has lost it, and your picking the fifty guineas out of his pocket, if you had met him dead drunk in his way home to-night. Nay, he who meets a man already drunk and robs him, commits but one sin; while he who makes him drunk first that he may rob him afterward, commits two.

Bragwell gravely replied: "Mr. Worthy, while I have the practice of people of credit to support me, and the law of the land to protect me, I see no reason to be ashamed of anything I do." "Mr. Bragwell," answered Worthy, "a truly honest man is not always looking sharp about him, to see how far custom and the law will bear him out; if he be honest on principle, he will consult the law of his conscience, and if he be a Christian, he will consult the written law of God. We never deceive ourselves more than when we overreach others. You would not allow that you had robbed your neighbor for the world, yet you are not ashamed to own you have outwitted him. I have read this great truth in the works of a heathen, Mr. Bragwell, that the chief misery of man arises from his not knowing how to make right calculations.

Bragwell. Sir, the remark does not belong to me. I have not made an error of a farthing. Look at the account, sir—right to the smallest fraction.

Worthy. Sir, I am talking of final accounts; spiritual calculations; arithmetic in the long run. Now, in this, your real Christian is the only true calculator: he has found out that we shall be richer in the end, by denying, than by indulging ourselves.

He knows that when the balance comes to be struck, when profit and loss shall be summed up, and the final account adjusted, that whatever ease, prosperity, and delight, we had in this world, yet if we have lost our souls in the end, we can not reckon that we have made a good bargain. We can not pretend that a few items of present pleasure make any great figure, set over against the sum total of eternal misery. So you see it is only for want of a good head at calculation that men prefer time to eternity, pleasure to holiness, earth to heaven. You see if we get our neighbor's money at the price of our own integrity; hurt his good name, but destroy our own souls; raise our outward character, but wound our inward conscience; when we come to the last reckoning, we shall find that we were only knaves in the second instance, but fools in the first. In short, we shall find that whatever other wisdom we possessed, we were utterly ignorant of the skill of true calculation.

Notwithstanding this rebuff, Mr. Bragwell got home in high spirits, for no arguments could hinder him from feeling that he had the fifty guineas in his purse.

There is to a worldly man something so irresistible in the actual possession of present, and visible, and palpable pleasure, that he considers it as a proof of his wisdom to set them in decided opposition to the invisible realities of eternity.

As soon as Bragwell came in, he gayly threw the money he had received on the table, and desired his wife to lock it up. Instead of receiving it with her usual satisfaction, she burst into a violent fit of passion, and threw it back to him. "You may keep your cash yourself," said she. "It is all over—we want no more money. You are a ruined man! A wicked creature, scraping and working as we have done for her!"—Bragwell trembled, but durst not ask what he dreaded to hear. His wife spared him the trouble, by crying out as soon as her rage permitted: "The

girl is ruined ; Polly is gone off !" Poor Bragwell's heart sunk within him ; he grew sick and giddy, and as his wife's rage swallowed up her grief, so, in his grief, he almost forgot his anger. The purse fell from his hand, and he cast a look of anguish upon it, finding, for the first time that money could not relieve his misery.

Mr. Worthy, who though much concerned, was less discomposed, now called to mind, that the young lady had not returned with her mother and sister the night before : he begged Mrs. Bragwell to explain this sad story. She, instead of soothing her husband, fell to reproaching him. " It is all your fault," said she ; " you were a fool for your pains.—If I had had my way the girls would never have kept company with any but men of substance, and then they could not have been ruined." " Mrs. Bragwell," said Worthy, " if she has chosen a bad man, it would be still a misfortune, even though he had been rich." " O, that would alter the case," said she, "*a fat sorrow is better than a lean one.* But to marry a beggar ! there is no sin like that." Here Miss Betsey, who stood sullenly by, put in a word, and said, her sister, however, had not disgraced herself by having married a farmer or a tradesman ; she had, at least, made choice of a gentleman. " What marriage ! what gentleman !" cried the afflicted father ; " tell me the worst !" He was now informed that his darling daughter was gone off with a strolling player, who had been acting in the neighboring villages lately. Miss Betsey again put in, saying, he was no stroller, but a gentleman in disguise, who only acted for his own diversion. " Does he so," said the now furious Bragwell, " then he shall be transported for mine."

At this moment a letter was brought him from his new son-in-law, who desired his leave to wait upon him, and implore his forgiveness. He owned he had been shopman to a haberdasher ; but thinking his person and talents ought not to be thrown away upon

trade, and being also a little behind hand, he had taken to the stage with a view of making his fortune : that he had married Miss Bragwell entirely for love, and was sorry to mention so paltry a thing as money, which he despised, but that his wants were pressing : his landlord, to whom he was in debt, having been so vulgar as to threaten to send him to prison. He ended with saying : “ I have been obliged to shock your daughter’s delicacy, by confessing my unlucky real name ; I believe I owe part of my success with her, to my having assumed that of Augustus Frederick Theodosius. She is inconsolable at this confession, which, as you are now my father, I must also make to you, and subscribe myself, with many blushes, by the vulgar name of your dutiful son,

“TIMOTHY INCLE.”

“ O ! ” cried the afflicted father, as he tore the letter in a rage, “ Miss Bragwell married to a strolling actor ! How shall I bear it ? ” “ Why, I would not bear it at all,” cried the enraged mother ; “ I would never see her ; I would never forgive her ; I would let her starve at the corner of the barn, while that rascal, with all those pagan, popish names, was ranting away at the other.” “ Nay,” said Miss Betsey, “ if he is only a shopman, and if his name be really Timothy Inkle, I would never forgive her neither. But who would have thought it by his looks, and by his *monstrous genteel* behavior ? no, he never can have so vulgar a name.”

“ Come, come,” said Mr. Worthy, “ were he really an honest haberdasher, I should think there was no other harm done, except the disobedience of the thing. Mr. Bragwell, this is no time to blame you, or hardly to reason with you. I feel for you sincerely. I ought not, perhaps, just at present, to reproach you for the mistaken manner in which you have bred up your daughters, as your error has brought its punishment along with it. You now see, because you now feel, the evil of a false education. It has ruined your

daughter ; your whole plan unavoidably led to some such end. The large sums you spent to qualify them, as you thought, for a high station, only served to make them despise their own, and could do them nothing but harm, while your habits of life properly confined them to company of a lower class. While they were better dressed than the daughters of the first gentry, they were worse taught as to real knowledge, than the daughters of your ploughmen. Their vanity has been raised by excessive finery, and kept alive by excessive flattery. Every evil temper has been fostered by indulgence. Their pride has never been controlled ; their self-will has never been subdued ; their idleness has laid them open to every temptation, and their abundance has enabled them to gratify every desire ; their time, that precious talent, has been entirely wasted. Everything they have been taught to do is of no use, while they are utterly unacquainted with all which they ought to have known. I deplore Miss Polly's false step. That she should have married a runaway shopman turned stroller, I truly lament. But for what better husband was she qualified ? For the wife of a farmer she was too idle : for the wife of a tradesman she was too expensive : for the wife of a gentleman she was too ignorant. You, yourself, was most to blame. You expected her to act wisely, though you never taught her that *fear of God which is the beginning of wisdom*. I owe it to you, as a friend, and to myself as a Christian, to declare, that your practices in the common transactions of life, as well as your present misfortune, are almost the natural consequences of those false principles which I protested against when you were at my house."

Mrs. Bragwell attempted several times to interrupt Mr. Worthy, but her husband would not permit it. He felt the force of all his friend said, and encouraged him to proceed. Mr. Worthy thus went on : "It grieves me to say how much your own indiscretion

has contributed even to bring on your present misfortune. You gave your countenance to this very company of strollers, though you knew they were acting in defiance to the laws of the land, to say no worse. They go from town to town, and from barn to barn, stripping the poor of their money, the young of their innocence, and all of their time. Do you remember with how much pride you told me that you had bespoke *The Bold Stroke for a Wife*, for the benefit of this very Mr. Frederic Theodosius? To this pernicious ribalry you not only carried your own family, but wasted I know not how much money in treating your workmen's wives and children, in these hard times too when they have scarcely bread to eat, or a shoe on their feet: and all this only that you might have the absurd pleasure of seeing those flattering words, *By desire of Mr. Bragwell*, stuck up in print at the public house, on the blacksmith's shed, at the turnpike-gate, and on the barn-door."

Mr. Bragwell acknowledged that his friend's rebuke was too just, and he looked so very contrite as to raise the pity of Mr. Worthy, who, in a mild voice, thus went on: "What I have said is not so much to reproach you with the ruin of one daughter, as from a desire to save the other. Let Miss Betsey go home with me. I do not undertake to be her jailer, but I will be her friend. She will find in my daughters kind companions, and in my wife a prudent guide. I know she will dislike us at first, but I do not despair in time of convincing her that a sober, humble, useful, pious life, is as necessary to make us happy on earth, as it is to fit us for heaven."

Poor Miss Betsey, though she declared it would be *frightful dull and monstrous vulgar and dismal melancholy*, yet was she so terrified at the discontent and grumbling which she would have to endure at home, that she sullenly consented. She had none of that filial tenderness which led her to wish to stay and sooth and comfort her afflicted father. All she thought

about was to get out of the way of her mother's ill humor, and to carry so much finery with her as to fill the Miss Worthys with envy and respect. Poor girl! she did not know that envy was a feeling they never indulged; and that fine clothes were the last thing to draw their respect.

Mr. Worthy took her home next day. When they reached his house they found there young Wilson, Miss Betsey's old admirer. She was much pleased at this, and resolved to treat him well. But her good or ill treatment now signified but little. This young grazier revered Mr. Worthy's character, and ever since he had met him at the Lion, had been thinking what a happiness it would be to marry a young woman bred up by such a father. He had heard much of the modesty and discretion of both the daughters, but his inclination now determined him in favor of the elder.

Mr. Worthy, who knew him to be a young man of good sense and sound principles, allowed him to become a visiter at his house, but deferred his consent to the marriage till he knew him more thoroughly. Mr. Wilson, from what he saw of the domestic piety of this family, improved daily, both in the knowledge and practice of religion; and Mr. Worthy soon formed him into a most valuable character. During this time Miss Bragwell's hopes had revived; but though she appeared in a new dress almost every day she had the mortification of being beheld with great indifference by one whom she had always secretly liked. Mr. Wilson married before her face a girl who was greatly her inferior in fortune, person, and appearance; but who was humble, frugal, meek, and pious. Miss Bragwell now strongly felt the truth of what Mr. Wilson had once told her, that "a woman may make an excellent partner for a dance who would make a very bad companion for life."

VI.—GOOD RESOLUTIONS.

MR. BRAGWELL was so much afflicted at the disgraceful marriage of his daughter, who ran off with Timothy Ince, the strolling player, that he never fully recovered his spirits. His cheerfulness, which had arisen from a high opinion of himself, had been confirmed by a constant flow of uninterrupted success; and that is a sort of cheerfulness which is very liable to be impaired, because it lies at the mercy of every accident and cross event in life. But though his pride was now disappointed, his misfortunes had not taught him any humility, because he had not discovered that they were caused by his own fault; nor had he acquired any patience or submission because he had not learnt that all afflictions come from the hand of God, to awaken us to a deep sense of our sins, and to draw off our hearts from the perishing vanities of this life. Besides, Mr. Bragwell was one of those people who, even if they would be thought to bear with tolerable submission such trials as appear to be sent more immediately from Providence, yet think they have a sort of right to rebel at every misfortune which befalls them through the fault of a fellow-creature; as if our fellow-creatures were not the agents and instruments by which Providence often sees fit to try or to punish us.

In answer to his heavy complaints, Mr. Worthy wrote him a letter, in which he expatiated on the injustice of our impatience, and on the folly of our vindicating ourselves from guilt in the distinctions we make between those trials which seem to come more immediately from God, and those which proceed directly from the faults of our fellow-creatures. "Sickness, losses, and death, we think," continued he, "we dare not openly rebel against; while we fancy we are quite justified in giving a loose to our violence when we suffer by the hand of the oppressor, the unkindness of the friend, or the disobedience of the child. But this is one of the delusions of our blinded hearts. In-

gratitude, unkindness, calumny, are permitted to assail us by the same power who cuts off 'the desire of our eyes at a stroke.' The friend who betrays us, and the daughter who deceives us, are instruments for our chastisement, sent by the same purifying hand who orders a fit of sickness to weaken our bodies, or a storm to destroy our crop, or a fire to burn down our house. And we must look for the same remedy in the one case as in the other; I mean prayer and a deep submission to the will of God. We must leave off looking at second causes, and look more at Him who sets them in action. We must try to find out the meaning of the providence; and hardly dare pray to be delivered from it till it has accomplished in us the end for which it was sent."

His imprudent daughter, Bragwell would not be brought to see or forgive, nor was the degrading name of Mrs. Incle ever allowed to be pronounced in his hearing. He had loved her with an excessive and undue affection; and while she gratified his vanity by her beauty and finery, he deemed her faults of little consequence; but when she disappointed his ambition by a disgraceful marriage, all his natural affection only served to increase his resentment. Yet, though he regretted her crime less than his own mortification, he never ceased in secret to lament her loss. She soon found out she was undone; and wrote in a strain of bitter repentance to ask him for forgiveness. She owned that her husband, whom she had supposed to be a man of fashion in disguise, was a low person in distressed circumstances. She implored that her father, though he refused to give her husband that fortune for which alone it was now too plain he had married her, would at least allow her some subsistence; for that Mr. Incle was much in debt, and she feared in danger of a jail.

The father's heart was half melted at this account, and his affection was for a time awakened. But Mrs. Bragwell opposed his sending her any assistance.

She always made it a point of duty never to forgive ; for she said it only encouraged those who had done wrong once to do worse next time. For her part she had never yet been guilty of so mean and pitiful a weakness as to forgive any one ; for to pardon an injury always showed either want of spirit to feel it, or want of power to resent it. She was resolved she would never squander the money for which she had worked early and late, on a baggage who had thrown herself away on a beggar, while she had a daughter single, who might yet raise her family by a great match. I am sorry to say that Mrs. Bragwell's anger was not owing to the undutifulness of the daughter, or the worthlessness of the husband ; poverty was in her eyes the grand crime. The doctrine of forgiveness, as a religious principle, made no more a part of Mr. Bragwell's system than of his wife's ; but in natural feeling, particularly for this offending daughter, he much exceeded her.

In a few months the youngest Miss Bragwell desired leave to return home from Mr. Worthy's. She had, indeed, only consented to go thither as a less evil of the two, than staying in her father's house after her sister's elopement. But the sobriety and simplicity of Mr. Worthy's family were irksome to her. Habits of vanity and idleness were become so rooted in her mind, that any degree of restraint was a burthen ; and though she was outwardly civil, it was easy to see that she longed to get away. She resolved, however, to profit by her sister's faults ; and made her parents easy by assuring them she never would throw herself away on a *man who was worth nothing*. Encouraged by these promises, which her parents thought included the whole sum and substance of human wisdom, and which was all they said they could in reason expect, her father allowed her to come home.

Mr. Worthy, accompanied her, found Mr. Bragwell gloomy and dejected. As his house was no long-

er a scene of vanity and festivity, Mr. Bragwell tried to make himself and his friend believe that he was grown religious; whereas he was only become discontented. As he had always fancied that piety was a melancholy, gloomy thing, and as he felt his own mind really gloomy, he was willing to think that he was growing pious. He had, indeed, gone more constantly to church, and had taken less pleasure in feasting and cards, and now and then read a chapter in the Bible; but all this was because his spirits were low, and not because his heart was changed. The outward actions were more regular, but the inward man was the same. The forms of religion were resorted to as a painful duty: but this only added to his misery, while he was utterly ignorant of its spirit and its power. He still, however, reserved religion as a loathsome medicine, to which he feared he must have recourse at last, and of which he even now considered every abstinence from pleasure, or every exercise of piety, as a bitter dose. His health also was impaired, so that his friend found him in a pitiable state, neither able to receive pleasure from the world, which he so dearly loved, nor from religion which he so greatly feared. He expected to have been much commended by Worthy for the change in his way of life; but Worthy, who saw that the alteration was only owing to the loss of animal spirits, and to the casual absence of temptation, was cautious of flattering him too much. "I thought, Mr. Worthy," said he, "to have received more comfort from you. I was told, too, that religion was full of comfort, but I do not much find it."—"You were told the truth," replied Worthy; "religion is full of comfort, but you must first be brought into a state fit to receive it before it can become so; you must be brought to a deep and humbling sense of sin. To give you comfort while you are puffed up with high thoughts of yourself, would be to give you a strong cordial in a high fever. Religion keeps back her cordials till the patient is lowered and emptied:

emptied of self, Mr. Bragwell. If you had a wound, it must be examined and cleansed, ay, and probed too, before it would be safe to put on a healing plaster. Curing it to the outward eye, while it was corrupt at bottom, would only bring on a mortification, and you would be a dead man, while you trusted that the plaster was curing you. You must be, indeed, a Christian before you can be entitled to the comforts of Christianity."

"I am a Christian," said Mr. Bragwell; "many of my friends are Christians, but I do not see it has done us much good." "Christianity itself," answered Worthy, "can not make us good, unless it be applied to our hearts. Christian privileges will not make us Christians, unless we make use of them. On that shelf I see stands your medicine. 'The doctor orders you to take it. *Have* you taken it?' "Yes," replied Bragwell. "Are you the better for it?" said Worthy. "I think I am," he replied. "But," added Mr. Worthy, "are you the better because the doctor has ordered it merely, or because you have also taken it?" "What a foolish question," cried Bragwell; "why to be sure the doctor might be the best doctor, and his physic the best physic in the world; but if it stood for ever on the shelf, I could not expect to be cured by it. My doctor is not a mountebank. He does not pretend to cure by a charm. The physic is good, and as it suits my case, though it is bitter, I take it."

"You have now," said Mr. Worthy, "explained undesignedly the reason why religion does so little good in the world. It is not a mountebank; it does not work by a charm; but it offers to cure your worst corruptions by wholesome, though sometimes bitter prescriptions. But you will not take them; you will not apply to God with the same earnest desire to be healed with which you apply to your doctor; you will not confess your sins to one as honestly as you tell your symptoms to the other, nor read your

Bible with the same faith and submission with which you take your medicine. In reading it, however, you must take care not to apply to yourself the comforts which are not suited to your case. You must by the grace of God, be brought into a condition to be entitled to the promises, before you can expect the comfort of them. Conviction is not conversion; that worldly discontent, which is the effect of worldly disappointment, is not that *godly sorrow which worketh repentance*. Besides, while you have been pursuing all the gratifications of the world, do not complain that you have not all the comforts of religion too. Could you live in the full enjoyment of both, the *Bible would not be true*."

Bragwell. Well, sir, but I do a good action sometimes; and God, who knows he did not make us perfect, will accept it, and for the sake of my good actions will forgive my faults.

Worthy. Depend upon it God will never forgive your sins for the sake of your virtues. There is no commutation tax there. But he will forgive them on your sincere repentance, for the sake of Jesus Christ. Goodness is not a single act to be done; so that a man can say, I have achieved it, and the thing is over; but it is a habit that is to be constantly maintained; it is a continual struggle with the opposite vice. No man must reckon himself good for anything he has already done; though he may consider it as an evidence that he is in the right way, if he feels a constant disposition to resist every evil temper. But every Christian grace will always find work enough; and he must not fancy that because he has conquered once, his virtue may now sit down and take a holiday.

Bragwell. But I thought we Christians need not be watchful against sin; because Christ, as you so often tell me, died for sinners.

Worthy. Do not deceive yourself: the evangelical doctrines, while they so highly exalt a Savior, do not

diminish the heinousness of sin, they rather magnify it. Do not comfort yourself by extenuation or mitigation of sin; but by repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. It is not by diminishing or denying your debt; but by confessing it, by owning you have nothing to pay, that forgiveness is to be hoped.

Bragwell. I don't understand you. You want to have me as good as a saint, and as penitent as a sinner at the same time.

Worthy. I expect of every real Christian, that is, every real penitent, that he should labor to get his heart and life impressed with the stamp of the Gospel. I expect to see him aiming at a conformity in spirit and in practice to the will of God in Jesus Christ. I expect to see him gradually attaining toward an entire change from his natural self. When I see a man at constant war with those several pursuits and tempers which are with peculiar propriety termed *worldly*, it is a plain proof to me that the change must have passed on him which the gospel emphatically terms becoming "a new man."

Bragwell. I hope then I am altered enough to please you. I am sure affliction has made such a change in me, that my best friends hardly know me to be the same man.

Worthy. That is not the change I mean. 'Tis true, from a merry man you are become a gloomy man; but that is because you have been disappointed in your schemes: the principle remains unaltered. A great match for your single daughter would at once restore all the spirits you have lost by the imprudence of your married one. The change the Gospel requires is of quite another cast: it is having "a new heart and a right spirit;" it is being "God's workmanship;" it is being "created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works;" it is becoming "new creatures;" it is "old things being done away, and all things made new;" it is by so "learning the truth as

it is in Jesus—to the putting off the old man, and putting on the new, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness;” it is by “partaking of the divine nature.” Pray observe, Mr. Bragwell, these are not my words, nor words picked out of any fanatical book; they are the words of that Gospel you profess to believe; it is not a new doctrine, it is as old as our religion itself. Though I can not but observe, that men are more reluctant in believing, more averse to adopting this doctrine than almost any other; and indeed I do not wonder at it; for there is perhaps no one which so attacks corruption in its strong holds; no one which so thoroughly prohibits a lazy Christian from uniting a life of sinful indulgence with an outward profession of piety.

Bragwell now seemed resolved to set about the matter in earnest; but he resolved in his own strength; he never thought of applying for assistance to the Fountain of Wisdom; to Him who giveth might to them who have no strength. Unluckily, the very day Mr. Worthy took leave, there happened to be a grand ball at the next town, on account of the assizes. An assize-ball, courteous reader, is a scene to which gentlemen and ladies periodically resort to celebrate the crimes and calamities of their fellow-creatures, by dancing and music, and to divert themselves with feasting and drinking, while unhappy wretches are receiving sentence of death.

To this ball Miss Bragwell went, dressed out with a double portion of finery, pouring out on her head, in addition to her own ornaments, the whole band-box of feathers, beads, and flowers, her sister had left behind her. While she was at the ball her father formed many plans of religious reformation; he talked of lessening his business, that he might have more leisure for devotion; though not *just now*, while the markets were so high; and then he began to think of sending a handsome subscription to the infirmary; though, on second thoughts, he concluded he need

not be in a *hurry*, but might as well leave it in his will; though to *give*, and *repent*, and *reform*, were three things he was bent upon. But when his daughter came home at night so happy and so fine, and telling how she had danced with Squire Squeeze, the great corn contractor, and how many fine things he had said to her, Mr. Bragwell felt the old spirit of the world return in its full force. A marriage with Mr. Dashall Squeeze, the contractor, was beyond his hopes; for Mr. Squeeze was supposed from a very low beginning to have got rich during the war.

As for Mr. Squeeze, he had picked up as much of the history of his partner between the dances as he desired; he was convinced there would be no money wanting; for Miss Bragwell, who was now looked on as an only child, must needs be a great fortune, and Mr. Squeeze was too much used to advantageous contracts to let this slip. As he was gaudily dressed, and possessed all the arts of vulgar flattery, Miss Bragwell eagerly caught at his proposal to wait on her father next day. Squeeze was quite a man after Bragwell's own heart, a genius at getting money, a fine dashing fellow at spending it. He told his wife that this was the very sort of a man for his daughter; for he got money like a Jew and spent it like a prince; but whether it was fairly got, or wisely spent, he was too much a man of the world to inquire. Mrs. Bragwell was not so run away with by appearances, but that she desired her husband to be careful, and make himself quite sure it was the right Mr. Squeeze, and no impostor. But being assured by her husband that Betsey would certainly keep her carriage, she never gave herself one thought with what sort of a man she was to ride in it. To have one of her daughters drive in her own coach, filled up all her ideas of human happiness, and drove the other daughter quite out of her head. The marriage was celebrated with great splendor, and Mr. and Mrs. Squeeze set off for London, where they had taken a house.

Mr. Bragwell now tried to forget that he had any other daughter; and if some thoughts of the resolutions he had made of entering on a more religious course would sometimes force themselves upon him, they were put off, like the repentance of Felix, *to a more convenient season*: and finding he was likely to have a grandchild, he became more worldly and more ambitious than ever; thinking this a just pretence for adding house to house, and field to field. And there is no stratagem by which men more fatally deceive themselves, than when they make even unborn children a pretence for that rapine, or that hoarding, of which their own covetousness is the true motive. Whenever he ventured to write to Mr. Worthy about the wealth, the gayety, and the grandeur of Mr. and Mrs. Squeeze, that faithful friend honestly reminded him of the vanity and uncertainty of worldly greatness, and the error he had been guilty of in marrying his daughter before he had taken time to inquire into the real character of the man, saying, that he could not help foreboding that the happiness of a match made at a ball might have an untimely end.

Notwithstanding Mr. Bragwell had paid down a larger fortune than was prudent, for fear Mr. Squeeze should fly off, yet he was surprised to receive very soon a pressing letter from him, desiring him to advance a considerable sum, as he had the offer of an advantageous purchase, which he must lose for want of money. Bragwell was staggered, and refused to comply; but his wife told him he must not be shabby to such a gentleman as Squire Squeeze; for that she heard on all sides such accounts of their grandeur, their feasts, their carriages, and their liveries, that she and her husband ought even to deny themselves comforts to oblige such a generous son, who did all this in honor of their daughter; besides, if he did not send the money soon, they might be obliged to lay down their coach, and then she should never be able to show her face again. At length Mr. Bragwell

lent him the money on his bond ; he knew Squeeze's income was large ; for he had carefully inquired into this particular, and for the rest he took his word. Mrs. Squeeze also got great presents from her mother, by representing to her how expensively they were forced to live to keep up their credit, and what honor she was conferring on the family of the Bragwells, by spending their money in such grand company. Among many other letters she wrote her the following :—

“ TO MRS. BRAGWELL.

“ You can't imagine, dear mother, how charmingly we live.—I lie a-bed almost all day, and am up all night ; but it is never dark for all that, for we burn such numbers of candles all at once, that the sun would be of no use at all in London. Then I am so happy ! for we are never quiet a moment, Sundays or working-days ; nay, I should not know which was which, only that we have most pleasure on a Sunday ; because it is the only day on which people have nothing to do but to divert themselves. Then the great folks are all so kind, and so good ; they have not a bit of pride, for they will come and eat and drink, and win my money, just as if I was their equal ; and if I have got but a cold, they so very unhappy that they send to know how I do ; and though I suppose they can't rest till the footman has told them, yet they are so polite, that if I have been dying they seem to have forgotten it the next time we meet, and not to know but they have seen me the day before. Oh ! they are true friends ; and for ever smiling, and so fond of one another, that they like to meet and enjoy one another's company by hundreds, and always think the more the merrier. I shall never be tired of such a delightful life.

“ Your dutiful daughter,
“ BETSEY SQUEEZE.”

The style of her letters, however, altered in a few months. She owned that though things went on gayer and grander than ever, yet she hardly ever saw her husband, except her house was full of company and cards, or dancing was going on ; that he was often so busy 'abroad he could not come home all night ; that he always borrowed the money her mother sent her when he was going out on this nightly business ; and that the last time she had asked *him* for money he cursed and swore, and bid her apply to the old farmer and his rib, who were made of money. This letter Mrs. Bragwell concealed from her husband.

At length, on some change in public affairs, Mr. Squeeze, who had made an overcharge of some thousand pounds in one article, lost his contract ; he was found to owe a large debt to government, and his accounts must be made up immediately. This was impossible ; he had not only spent his large income, without making any provision for his family, but had contracted heavy debts by gaming and other vices. His creditors poured in upon him. He wrote to Bragwell to borrow another sum ; but without hinting at the loss of his contract. These repeated demands made Bragwell so uneasy, that instead of sending him the money, he resolved to go himself secretly to London, and judge by his own eyes how things were going on, as his mind strangely misgave him. He got to Mr. Squeeze's house about eleven at night, and knocked gently, concluding that they must needs be gone to bed. But what was his astonishment to find the hall was full of men ; he pushed through in spite of them, though to his great surprise, they insisted on knowing his name, saying they must carry it to their lady. This affronted him : he refused, saying, " It is not because I am ashamed of my name, it will pass for thousands in any market in the west of England. Is this your London manners, not to let a man of my credit in without knowing his name indeed !" What was his amazement to see every room as full of card-

tables and of fine gentlemen and ladies as it would hold. All was so light, and so gay, and so festive and so grand, that he reproached himself for his suspicions, thought nothing too good for them, and resolved secretly to give Squeeze another five hundred pounds to help to keep up so much grandeur and happiness. At length seeing a footman he knew, he asked him where were his master and mistress, for he could not pick them out among the company; or rather his ideas were so confused with the splendor of the scene, that he did not know whether they were there or not. The man said, that "his master had just sent for his lady up stairs, and he believed that he was not well." Mr. Bragwell said "he would go up himself and look for his daughter, as he could not speak so freely to her before all that company."

He went up, knocked at the chamber door, and its not being opened, made him push it with some violence. He heard a bustling noise within, and again made a fruitless attempt to open the door. At this the noise increased, and Mr. Bragwell was struck to the heart at the sound of a pistol from within. He now kicked so violently against the door that it burst open, when the first sight he saw was his daughter falling to the ground in a fit, and Mr. Squeeze dying by a shot from a pistol which was dropping out of his hand. Mr. Bragwell was not the only person whom the sound of the pistol had alarmed. The servants, the company, all heard it, and all ran up to this scene of horror. Those who had the best of the game took care to bring up their tricks in their hands, having had the prudence to leave the very few who could be trusted, to watch the stakes, while those who had a prospect of losing profited by the confusion, and threw up their cards. All was dismay and terror. Some ran for a surgeon, others examined the dying man; some removed Mrs. Squeeze to her bed, while poor Bragwell could neither see nor hear, nor do anything. One of the company took up a letter which lay open

upon the table, and was addressed to him ; they read it, hoping it might explain the horrid mystery. It was as follows :—

“ TO MR. BRAGWELL.

“ SIR: Fetch home your daughter; I have ruined her, myself, and the child to which she every hour expects to be a mother. I have lost my contract. My debts are immense. You refuse me money; I must die then; but I will die like a man of spirit. They wait to take me to prison; I have two executions in my house; but I have ten card-tables in it. I would die as I have lived. I invited all this company, and have drunk hard since dinner to get primed for the dreadful deed. My wife refuses to write to you for another thousand, and she must take the consequences. *Vanity* has been my ruin; it has caused all my crimes. Whoever is resolved to live beyond his income is liable to every sin. He can never say to himself, ‘ Thus far shalt thou go and no farther.’ Vanity led me to commit acts of rapine, that I might live in splendor; vanity makes me commit self-murder, because I will not live in poverty. The new philosophy says, that death is an eternal sleep; but the new philosophy lies. Do you take heed; it is too late for me: the dreadful gulf yawns to swallow me; I plunge into perdition: there is no repentance in the grave, no hope in hell.

“ Yours, &c.

“ DASHALL SQUEEZE.”

The dead body was removed, and Mr. Bragwell remaining almost without speech or motion, the company began to think of retiring, much out of humor at having their party so disagreeably broken up: they comforted themselves, however, that it was *so early* (for it was now scarcely twelve) they could finish their evening at another party or two; so completely do habits of *pleasure*, as it is called, harden the heart, and steel it not only against virtuous impressions, but

against natural feelings ! Now it was, that those who had nightly rioted at the expense of these wretched people, were the first to abuse them. Not an offer of assistance was made to this poor forlorn woman ; not a word of kindness or of pity ; nothing but censure was now heard. “ Why must these upstarts ape people of quality ? ” though as long as these upstarts could feast them, their vulgarity and their bad character had never been produced against them. “ As long as thou dost well unto thyself, men shall speak good of thee.” One guest who, unluckily, had no other house to go to, coolly said, as he walked off, “ Squeeze might as well have put off shooting himself till the morning. It was monstrously provoking that he could not wait an hour or two.”

As everything in the house was seized, Mr. Bragwell prevailed on his miserable daughter, weak as she was, next morning to set out with him to the country. His acquaintance with polite life was short, but he had seen a great deal in a little time. They had a slow and sad journey. In about a week, Mrs. Squeeze lay-in of a dead child ; she herself languished a few days, and then died ; and the afflicted parents saw the two darling objects of their ambition, for whose sakes they had made *too much haste to be rich*, carried to the land where all things are forgotten. Mrs. Bragwell’s grief, like her other passions, was extravagant ; and poor Bragwell’s sorrow was rendered so bitter by self-reproach, that he would quite have sunk under it, had he not thought of his old expedient in distress, that of sending for Mr. Worthy to comfort him.

It was Mr. Worthy’s way, to warn people of those misfortunes which he saw their faults must needs bring on them ; but not to reproach or desert them when the misfortunes came. He had never been near Bragwell, during the short but flourishing reign of the Squeezes : for he knew that prosperity made the ears deaf and the heart hard to counsel ; but as soon as he heard his friend was in trouble, he set out to go to

him. Bragwell burst into a violent fit of tears when he saw him, and when he could speak, said, "This trial is more than I can bear." Mr. Worthy kindly took him by the hand, and when he was a little composed, said, "I will tell you a short story—There was in ancient times a famous man who was a slave. His master, who was very good to him, one day gave him a bitter melon, and bade him eat it: he ate it up without one word of complaint.—‘How was it possible,’ said the master, ‘for you to eat so very nauseous and disagreeable a fruit?’—The slave replied, ‘My good master, I have received so many favors from your bounty, that it is no wonder if I should once in my life eat one bitter melon from your hands.’—This generous answer so struck the master, that the history says he gave him his liberty. With such submissive sentiments, my friend, should man receive his portion of sufferings from God, from whom he receives so many blessings. You in particular have received ‘much good at the hand of God, shall you not receive evil also?’ ”

“O! Mr. Worthy!” said Bragwell, “this blow is too heavy for me, I can not survive this shock: I do not desire it, I only wish to die.”—“We are very apt to talk most of dying when we are least fit for it,” said Worthy. “This is not the language of that submission, which makes us prepare for death; but of that despair which makes us out of humor with life. O! Mr. Bragwell! you are indeed disappointed of the grand ends which made life so delightful to you; but till your heart is humbled, till you are brought to a serious conviction of sin, till you are brought to see what is the true end of life, you can have no hope in death. You think you have no business on earth, because those for whose sake you too eagerly heaped up riches are no more. But is there not under the canopy of heaven some afflicted being whom you may yet relieve, some modest merit which you may bring forward, some helpless creature you may serve by your

advice, some perishing Christian you may sustain by your wealth? When you have no sins of your own to repent of, no mercies of God to be thankful for, no miseries of others to relieve, then, and not till then, I consent you should sink down in despair, and call on death to relieve you."

Mr. Worthy attended his afflicted friend to the funeral of his unhappy daughter and her babe. The solemn service, the committing his late gay and beautiful daughter to darkness, to worms, and to corruption; the sight of the dead infant, for whose sake he had resumed all his schemes of vanity and covetousness, when he thought he had got the better of them; the melancholy conviction that all human prosperity ends in *ashes to ashes, and dust to dust*, has brought down Mr. Bragwell's self-sufficient and haughty soul into something of that humble frame in which Mr. Worthy had wished to see it. As soon as they returned home, he was beginning to seize the favorable moment for fixing these serious impressions, when they were unseasonably interrupted by the parish officer, who came to ask Mr. Bragwell what he was to do with a poor dying woman who was travelling the country with her child, and was taken in a fit under the church-yard wall? "At first they thought she was dead," said the man, "but finding she still breathed, they have carried her into the workhouse till she could give some account of herself."

Mr. Bragwell was impatient at the interruption, which was indeed unseasonable, and told the man that he was at that time too much overcome by sorrow to attend to business, but he would give him an answer to-morrow. "But, my friend," said Mr. Worthy, "the poor woman may die to-night; your mind is indeed not in a frame for worldly business; but there is no sorrow too great to forbid our attending the calls of duty. An act of Christian charity will not disturb, but improve the seriousness of your spirit; and though you can not dry your own tears, God may in

great mercy permit you to dry those of another. This may be one of those occasions for which I told you life was worth keeping. Do let us see this woman." Bragwell was not in a state either to consent or refuse, and his friend drew him to the workhouse, about the door of which stood a crowd of people. "She is not dead," said one; "she moves her head—but she wants air," said all of them, while they all, according to custom, pushed so close upon her that it was impossible she could get any. A fine boy of two or three years old stood by her, crying, "Mammy is dead, mammy is starved." Mr. Worthy made up to the poor woman, holding his friend by the arm: in order to give her air he untied a large black bonnet which hid her face, when Mr. Bragwell, at that moment casting his eyes on her saw in this poor stranger the face of his own runaway daughter, Mrs. Ingle. He groaned, but could not speak; and as he was turning away to conceal his anguish, the little boy fondly caught hold of his hand, lisping out—"O stay and give mammy some bread!" His heart yearned toward the child; he grasped his little hand in his, while he sorrowfully said to Mr. Worthy, "It is too much, send away the people. It is my dear naughty child; *'my punishment is greater than I can bear.'*" Mr. Worthy desired the people to go and leave the stranger to them; but by this time she was no stranger to any of them. Pale and meager as was her face, and poor and shabby as was her dress, the proud and flaunting Miss Polly Bragwell was easily known by every one present. They went away, but with the mean revenge of little minds, they paid themselves by abuse, for all the airs and insolence they had once endured from her. "Pride must have a fall," said one. "I remember when she was too good to speak to a poor body," said another. "Where are her flounces and furbelows now? It is come home to her at last: her child looks as if he would be glad of the worst bit she formerly denied us."

In the meantime Mr. Bragwell had sunk into an old wicker chair which stood behind, and groaned out, "Lord, forgive my hard heart! Lord, subdue my proud heart, *create a clean heart, O God! and renew a right spirit within me.*" This was perhaps the first words of genuine prayer he had ever offered up in his whole life. Worthy overheard it, and in his heart rejoiced; but this was not a time for talking, but doing. He asked Bragwell what was to be done with the unfortunate woman, who now seemed to recover fast, but she did not see them, for they were behind. She embraced her boy, and faintly said, "My child what shall we do? *I will arise and go to my father, and say unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before thee.*" This was a joyful sound to Mr. Worthy, who was inclined to hope that her heart might be as much changed for the better as her circumstances were altered for the worse; and he valued the goods of fortune so little, and contrition of soul so much, that he began to think the change on the whole might be a happy one. The boy then sprung from his mother, and ran to Bragwell, saying, "Do be good to mammy." Mrs. Ince looking round, now perceived her father; she fell at his feet, saying, "O forgive your guilty child, and save your innocent one from starving!" Bragwell sunk down by her, and prayed God to forgive both her and himself in terms of genuine sorrow. To hear words of real penitence and heart-felt prayer from this once high-minded father and vain daughter, was music to Worthy's ears, who thought this moment of outward misery was the only joyful one he had ever spent in the Bragwell family.

He was resolved not to interfere, but to let the father's own feelings work out the way into which he was to act.

Bragwell said nothing, but slowly led to his own house, holding the little boy by the hand, and pointing to Worthy to assist the feeble steps of his daughter, who once more entered her father's doors; but

the dread of seeing her mother quite overpowered her. Mrs. Bragwell's heart was not changed, but sorrow had weakened her powers of resistance; and she rather suffered her daughter to come in, than gave her a kind reception. She was more astonished than pleased; and even in this trying moment, was more disgusted with the little boy's mean clothes, than delighted with his rosy face. As soon as she was a little recovered, Mr. Bragwell desired his daughter to tell him how she happened to be at that place at that time.

VII.—MRS. INCLE'S STORY.

"I LEFT your house, dear father," said Mrs. Incle, "with a heart full of vain triumph. I had no doubt but my husband was a great man, who put on that disguise to obtain my hand. Judge then what I felt to find that he was a needy impostor, who wanted my money, but did not care for me. This discovery, though it mortified, did not humble me. I had neither affection to bear with the man who had deceived me, nor religion to improve by the disappointment. I have found that change of circumstances does not change the heart, till God is pleased to do it. My misfortune only taught me to rebel more against him. I thought God unjust; I accused my father, I was envious of my sister, I hated my husband; but never once did I blame myself.

"My husband picked up a wretched subsistence by joining himself to any low scheme of idle pleasure that was going on. He would follow a mountebank, carry a dice-box, or fiddle at a fair. He was always taunting me for that gentility on which I so much valued myself. 'If I had married a poor working girl,' said he, 'she could now have got her bread; but a fine lady without money is a disgrace to herself,

a burden to her husband, and a plague to society.' Every trial which affection might have made lighter, we doubled by animosity : at length my husband was detected in using false dice ; he fought with his accuser, both were seized by a press-gang, and sent to sea. I was now left to the wide world ; and miserable as I had thought myself before, I soon found there were higher degrees of misery. I was near my time, without bread for myself, or hope for my child. I set out on foot in search of the village where I had heard my husband say his friends lived. It was a severe trial to my proud heart to stoop to those low people ; but hunger is not delicate, and I was near perishing. My husband's parents received me kindly, saying, that though they had nothing but what they earned by their labor, yet I was welcome to share their hard fare ; for they trusted that God who sent mouths would send meat also. They gave me a small room in their cottage, and furnished me with many necessities, which they denied themselves."

"O ! my child !" interrupted Bragwell, " every word cuts me to the heart. These poor people gladly gave thee of their little, while thy rich parents left thee to starve."

"How shall I own," continued Mrs. Incle, " that all this goodness could not soften my heart ; for God had not yet touched it. I received all their kindness as a favor done to them ; and thought them sufficiently rewarded for their attentions by the rank and merit of their daughter-in-law. When my father brought me home any little dainty which he could pick up, and my mother kindly dressed it for me, I would not condescend to eat it with them, but devoured it sullenly in my little garret alone suffering them to fetch and carry everything I wanted. As my haughty behavior was not likely to gain their affection, it was plain they did not love me : and as I had no notion that there were any motives to good actions but fondness, or self-interest, I was puzzled to know what

could make them so kind to me ; for of the powerful and constraining law of Christian charity I was quite ignorant. To cheat the weary hours, I looked about for some books, and found, among a few others of the same cast, ‘Doddridge’s Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul.’ But all those sort of books were addressed to *sinners* ; now as I knew I was not a sinner, I threw them away in disgust. Indeed they were ill-suited to a taste formed by plays and novels, to which reading I chiefly trace my ruin ; for, vain as I was, I should never have been guilty of so wild a step as to run away, had not my heart been tainted and my imagination inflamed by those pernicious books.

“At length my little George was born. This added to the burden I had brought on this poor family, but it did not diminish their kindness ; and we continued to share their scanty fare without any upbraiding on their part, or any gratitude on mine. Even this poor baby did not soften my heart ; I wept over him, indeed, day and night, but they were tears of despair ; I was always idle, and wasted those hours in sinful murmurs at his fate, which I should have employed in trying to maintain him. Hardship, grief, and impatience, at length brought on a fever. Death seemed now at hand, and I felt a gloomy satisfaction in the thought of being rid of my miseries, to which I fear was added a sullen joy, to think that you, sir, and my mother, would be plagued to hear of my death when it would be too late ; and in this your grief I anticipated a gloomy sort of revenge. But it pleased my merciful God not to let me thus perish in my sins. My poor mother-in-law sent for a good clergyman, who pointed out the danger of dying in that hard and uncontroverted state so forcibly, that I shuddered to find on what a dreadful precipice I stood. He prayed with me, and for me so earnestly, that at length God, who is sometimes pleased to magnify his own glory in awakening those who are dead in trespasses

and sins, was pleased of his free grace to open my blind eyes, and soften my stony heart. I saw myself a sinner, and prayed to be delivered from the wrath of God, in comparison of which the poverty and disgrace I now suffered appeared as nothing. To a soul convinced of sin, the news of a Redeemer was a joyful sound. Instead of reproaching Providence, or blaming my parents, or abusing my husband, I now learnt to condemn myself, to adore that God who had not cut me off in my ignorance, to pray for pardon for the past, and grace for the time to come. I now desired to submit to penury and hunger, so that I might but live in the fear of God in this world, and enjoy his favor in the next. I now learnt to compare my present light sufferings, the consequence of my own sin, with those bitter sufferings of my Savior, which he endured for my sake, and I was ashamed of murmuring. But self-ignorance, conceit, and vanity, were so rooted in me, that my progress was very gradual, and I had the sorrow to feel how much the power of long bad habits keeps down the growth of religion in the heart, even after the principle itself has begun to take root. I was so ignorant of divine things, that I hardly knew words to frame a prayer; but when I got acquainted with the Psalms, I there learnt how to pour out the fulness of my heart, while in the Gospel I rejoiced to see what great things God had done for my soul.

“I now took down once more from the shelf ‘Dodridge’s Rise and Progress;’ and oh! with what new eyes did I read it! I now saw clearly, that not only the thief and the drunkard, the murderer and the adulterer, are sinners, for that I knew before; but I found that the unbeliever, the selfish, the proud, the worldly-minded, all, in short, who live without God in the world, are sinners. I did not now apply the reproofs I met with to my husband, or my father; or other people, as I used to do; but brought them home to myself. In this book I traced, with strong emotions

and close self-application, the sinner through all his course; his first awakening, his convictions, repentance, joys, sorrows, back-sliding, and recovery, despondency, and delight, to a triumphant death-bed; and God was pleased to make it a chief instrument in bringing me to himself. Here it is," continued Mrs. Ince, untying her little bundle, and taking out a book; "accept it, my dear father, and I will pray that God may bless it to you, as he has done to me.

"When I was able to come down, I passed my time with these good old people, and soon won their affection. I was surprised to find they had very good sense, which I never had thought poor people could have; but, indeed, worldly persons do not know how much religion, while it mends the heart, enlightens the understanding also. I now regretted the evenings I had wasted in my solitary garret, when I might have passed them in reading the Bible with these good folks. This was their refreshing cordial after a weary day, which sweetened the pains of want and age. I one day expressed my surprise that my unfortunate husband, the son of such pious parents, should have turned out so ill: the poor old man said with tears, 'I fear we have been guilty of the sin of Eli; our love was of the wrong sort. Alas! like him, *we honored our son more than God*, and God has smitten us for it. We showed him by our example, what was right; but through a false indulgence, we did not correct him for what was wrong. We were blind to his faults. He was a handsome boy, with sprightly parts: we took too much delight in these outward things. He soon got above our management, and became vain, idle, and extravagant; and when we sought to restrain him, it was then too late. We humbled ourselves before God; but he was pleased to make our sin become its own punishment. Timothy grew worse and worse, till he was forced to abscond for a misdemeanor; after which we never saw him, but have often heard of him changing from one idle way of life to another;

unstable as water, he has been a footman, a soldier, a shopman, a gambler, and a strolling actor. With deep sorrow we trace back his vices to our ungoverned fondness; that lively and sharp wit, by which he has been able to carry on such a variety of wild schemes, might, if we had used him to bear reproof in his youth, have enabled him to have done great service for God and his country. But our flattering made him wise in his own conceit; and there is more hope of a fool than of him. We indulged our own vanity, and have destroyed his soul.' ”

Here Mr. Worthy stopped Mrs. Incle, saying, that whenever he heard it lamented that the children of pious parents often turned out so ill, he could not help thinking that there must be frequently something of this sort of error in the bringing them up; he knew, indeed, some instances to the contrary, in which the best means had failed; but he believed, that from Eli the priest, to Incle the laborer, much more than half the failures of this sort might be traced to some mistake, or vanity, or bad judgment, or sinful indulgence, in the parents.

“ I now looked about,” continued Mrs. Incle, “ in order to see in what I could assist my poor mother; regretting more heartily than she did, that I knew no one thing that was of any use. I was so desirous of humbling myself before God and her, that I offered even to try to wash.” — “ You wash !” exclaimed Bragwell, starting up with great emotion, “ Heaven forbid, that with such a fortune and education, Miss Bragwell should be seen at a washing-tub.” This vain father, who could bear to hear of her distresses and her sins, could not bear to hear of her washing. Mr. Worthy stopped him saying, “ As to her fortune, you know you refused to give her any; and as to her education, you see it had not taught her how to do anything better. I am sorry you do not see in this instance, the beauty of Christian humility. For my own part, I set a greater value on such an active proof

of it, than on a whole volume of professions."—Mr. Bragwell did not quite understand this, and Mrs. Ince went on. "What to do to get a penny I knew not. Making of filagree, or fringe, or card-purses, or cutting out paper, or dancing and singing, was of no use in our village. The shopkeeper, indeed, would have taken me, if I had known anything of accounts; and the clergyman could have got me a nursery-maid's place, if I could have done good plainwork. I made some awkward attempts to learn to spin and knit, when my mother's wheel or knitting lay by, but I spoiled both through my ignorance. At last I luckily thought upon the fine netting I used to make for my trimmings, and it struck me that I might turn this to some little account. I procured some twine, and worked early and late to make nets for fishermen, and cabbage-nets. I was so pleased that I had at last found an opportunity to show my good will by this mean work, that I regretted my little George was not big enough to contribute his share to our support, by travelling about to sell my nets."

"Cabbage-nets!" exclaimed Bragwell; "there is no bearing this.—Cabbage-nets! My grandson hawk cabbage-nets! How could you think of such a scandalous thing?" "Sir," said Mrs. Ince mildly, "I am now convinced that nothing is scandalous which is not wicked. Besides, we were in want; and necessity, as well as piety, would have reconciled me to this mean trade." Mr. Bragwell groaned, and bade her go on.

"In the meantime, my little George grew a fine boy; and I adored the goodness of God, who in the sweetness of maternal love, had given me a reward for many sufferings. Instead of indulging a gloomy distrust about the fate of this child, I now resigned him to the will of God. Instead of lamenting because he was not likely to be rich, I was resolved to bring him up with such notions as might make him contented to be poor. I thought if I could subdue all vanity and

selfishness in him, I should make him a happier man than if I had thousands to bestow on him ; and I trusted that I should be rewarded for every painful act of self-denial, by the future virtue and happiness of my child. Can you believe it, my dear father, my days now passed not unhappily ; I worked hard all day, and that alone is a source of happiness beyond what the idle can guess. After my child was asleep at night, I read a chapter in the Bible to my parents, whose eyes now began to fail them. We then thanked God over our frugal supper of potatoes, and talked over the holy men of old, the saints, and the martyrs, who would have thought our homely fare a luxury. We compared our peace, and liberty, and safety, with their bonds, and imprisonment, and tortures ; and should have been ashamed of a murmur. We then joined in prayer, in which my absent parents and my husband were never forgotten, and went to rest in charity with the whole world, and at peace in our own souls."

"Oh ! my forgiving child !" interrupted Mr. Bragwell, sobbing ; "and didst thou really pray for thy unnatural father ? and didst thou lay thee down in rest and peace ? Then, let me tell thee, thou wast better off than thy mother and I were.—But no more of this ; go on."

"Whether my father-in-law had worked beyond his strength, in order to support me and my child, I know not, but he was taken dangerously ill. While he lay in this state, he received an account that my husband was dead in the West-Indies of the yellow fever, which has carried off such numbers of our countrymen : we all wept together, and prayed that his awful death might quicken us in preparing for our own. This shock, joined to the fatigue of nursing her sick husband, soon brought my poor mother to death's door. I nursed them both, and felt a satisfaction in giving them all I had to bestow. my attendance, my tears, and my prayers. I, who was once so nice and

so proud, so disdainful in the midst of plenty, and so impatient under the smallest inconvenience, was now enabled to glorify God by my activity and by my submission. Though the sorrows of my heart were enlarged, I cast my burden on Him who cares for the weary and heavy laden. After having watched by these poor people the whole night. I sat down to breakfast on my dry crust and coarse dish of tea, without a murmur : my greatest grief was, lest I should bring away the infection to my dear boy ; for the fever was now become putrid. I prayed to know what it was my duty to do between my dying parents and my helpless child. To take care of the sick and aged, seemed to be my first duty ; so I offered up my child to Him who is the father of the fatherless, and he in mercy spared him to me.

“ The cheerful piety with which these good people breathed their last, proved to me, that the temper of mind with which the pious poor commonly meet death, is the grand compensation made them by Providence for all the hardships of their inferior condition. If they have had few joys and comforts in life already, and have still fewer hopes in store, is not all fully made up to them by their being enabled to leave this world with stronger desires of heaven, and without those bitter regrets after the good things of this life, which add to the dying tortures of the worldly rich ? To the forlorn and destitute, death is not so terrible as it is to him who *sits at ease in his possessions*, and who fears that this night his soul shall be required of him.”

Mr. Bragwell felt this remark more deeply than his daughter meant he should. He wept, and bade her proceed.

“ I followed my departed parents to the same grave, and wept over them, but not as one who had no hope. They had neither houses nor lands to leave me, but they left me their Bible, their blessing, and their example, of which I humbly trust I shall feel the benefits when all the riches of this world shall have an end.

Their few effects, consisting of some poor household goods, and some working-tools, hardly sufficed to pay their funeral expenses. I was soon attacked with the same fever, and saw myself, as I thought, dying the second time ; my danger was the same, but my views were changed. I now saw eternity in a more awful light than I had done before, when I wickedly thought death might be gloomily called upon as a refuge from every common trouble. Though I had still reason to be humble on account of my sin, yet, by the grace of God, I saw death stripped of his sting and robbed of his terrors, *through him who loved me, and gave himself for me ;* and in the extremity of pain, *my soul rejoiced in God my Savior.*

“I recovered, however, and was chiefly supported by the kind clergyman’s charity. When I felt myself nourished and cheered by a little tea or broth, which he daily sent me from his own slender provision, my heart smote me, to think how I had daily sat down at home to a plentiful dinner, without any sense of thankfulness for my own abundance, or without inquiring whether my poor sick neighbors were starving : and I sorrowfully remembered, that what my poor sister and I used to waste through daintiness, would now have comfortably fed myself and child. Believe me, my dear mother, a laboring man who has been brought low by a fever, might often be restored to his work some weeks sooner, if on his recovery he was nourished and strengthened by a good bit from a farmer’s table. Less than is often thrown to a favorite spaniel would suffice ; so that the expense would be almost nothing to the giver, while to the receiver it would bring health, and strength, and comfort, and recruited life. And it is with regret I must observe, that young women in our station are less attentive to the comforts of the poor, less active in visiting the cottages of the sick, less desirous of instructing the young, and working for the aged, than many ladies of higher rank. The multitude of opportunities of

this sort which we neglect, among the families of our father's distressed tenants and workmen, will I fear, one day appear against us.

"By the time I was tolerably recovered, I was forced to leave the house. I had no human prospect of subsistence. I humbly asked of God to direct my steps, and to give me entire obedience to his will. I then cast my eye mournfully on my child; and though prayer had relieved my heart of a load which without it would have been intolerable, my tears flowed fast, while I cried out in the bitterness of my soul, *How many hired servants of my father have bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with hunger.* 'This text appeared a kind of answer to my prayer, and gave me courage to make one more attempt to soften you in my favor. I resolved to set out directly to find you, to confess my disobedience, and to beg a scanty pittance, with which I and my child might be meanly supported in some distant country, where we should not, by our presence, disgrace our more happy relations. We set out and travelled as fast as my weak health and poor George's little feet and ragged shoes would permit. I brought a little bundle of such work and necessaries as I had left, by selling which we subsisted on the road.'" "I hope," interrupted Bragwell, "there were no cabbage-nets in it?" "At least," said her mother, "I hope you did not sell them near home?" "No; I had none left," said Mrs. Ince, "or I should have done it. I got many a lift in a wagon for my child and my bundle, which was a great relief to me, as I should have had both to carry. And here I can not help saying, I wish drivers would not be too hard in their demands, if they help a poor sick traveller on a mile or two, it proves a great relief to weary bodies and naked feet; and such little cheap charities may be considered as *the cup of cold water*, which, if given on right grounds, *shall not lose its reward.*" Here Bragwell sighed to think that when mounted on his fine bay mare, or driving

his neat chaise, it had never once crossed his mind that the poor way-worn foot traveller was not equally at his ease, nor had it ever occurred to him that shoes were a necessary accommodation. Those who want nothing are apt to forget how many there are who want everything. Mrs. Ince went on : “ I got to this village about seven this evening ; and while I sat on the church-yard wall to rest and meditate how I should make myself known at home, I saw a funeral ; I inquired whose it was, and learned it was my sister’s. This was too much for me, and I sank down in a fit, and knew nothing that happened to me from that moment, till I found myself in the workhouse with my father and Mr. Worthy.”

Here Mrs. Ince stopped. Grief, shame, pride, and remorse, had quite overcome Mr. Bragwell. He wept like a child, and said he hoped his daughter would pray for him ; for that he was not in a condition to pray for himself, though he found nothing else could give him any comfort. His deep dejection brought on a fit of sickness. “ O ! ” said he, “ I now begin to feel an expression in the sacrament which I used to repeat without thinking it had any meaning, the *remembrance of my sins is grievous, the burden of them is intolerable*. O ! it is awful to think what a sinner a man may be, and yet retain a decent character ! How many thousands are in my condition, taking to themselves all the credit of their prosperity, instead of giving God the glory ! heaping up riches to their hurt, instead of dealing their bread to the hungry ! O ! let those who hear of the Bragwell family, never say that *vanity is a little sin*. In me it has been the fruitful parent of a thousand sins—selfishness, hardness of heart, forgetfulness of God. In one of my sons, vanity was the cause of rapine, injustice, extravagance, ruin, self-murder. Both my daughters were undone by vanity, though it only wore the more harmless shape of dress, idleness, and dissipation. The husband of my daughter Ince it destroyed, by leading him to live

above his station, and to despise labor. Vanity ensnared the souls even of his pious parents, for while it led them to wish their son in a better condition, it led them to allow such indulgences as were unfit for his own. O! you who hear of us, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God; resist high thoughts; let every imagination be brought into obedience to the Son of God. If you set a value on finery look into that grave; behold the mouldering body of my Betsey, who now says to *corruption, thou art my father, and to the worm, thou art my mother and my sister.* Look to the bloody and brainless head of her husband. O, Mr. Worthy, how does Providence mock at human foresight! I have been greedy of gain, that the son of Mr. Squeeze might be a great man; he is dead; while the child of Timothy Ingle, whom I had doomed to beggary, will be my heir. Mr. Worthy, to you I commit this boy's education; teach him to value his immortal soul more, and the good things of this life less than I have done. Bring him up in the fear of God, and in the government of his passions. Teach him that unbelief and pride are at the root of all sin. I have found this to my cost. I trusted in my riches; I said, "To-morrow shall be as this day and more abundant." I did not remember that *for all these things God would bring me to judgment.* I am not sure that I believed in a judgment: I am not sure that I believed in a God."

Bragwell at length grew better, but he never recovered his spirits. The conduct of Mrs. Ingle through life was that of an humble Christian. She sold all her sister's finery which her father had given her, and gave the money to the poor; saying "It did not become one who professed penitence to return to the gayeties of life." Mr. Bragwell did not oppose this; not that he had fully acquired a just notion of the self-denying spirit of religion, but having a head not very clear at making distinctions, he was never able after the sight of Squeeze's mangled body, to

think of gayety and grandeur, without thinking at the same time of a pistol and bloody brains ; for, as his first introduction into gay life had presented him with all these objects at one view, he never afterward could separate them in his mind. He even kept his fine beaufet of plate always shut ; because it brought to his mind the grand unpaid-for sideboard that he had seen laid out for Mr. Squeeze's supper, to the remembrance of which he could not help tacking the idea of debts, prisons, executions, and self-murder.

Mr. Bragwell's heart had been so buried in the love of the world, and evil habits had become so rooted in him, that the progress he made in religion was very slow ; yet he earnestly prayed and struggled against sin and vanity ; and when his unfeeling wife declared she could not love the boy unless he was called by their name instead of Inkle, Mr. Bragwell would never consent, saying he stood in need of every help against pride. He also got the letter which Squeeze wrote just before he shot himself, framed and glazed ; this he hung up in his chamber, and made it a rule to go and read it as often as he found his heart disposed to VANITY.

II. PARLEY, THE PORTER:

SHOWING HOW ROBBERS WITHOUT CAN NEVER GET INTO A HOUSE, UNLESS THERE ARE TRAITORS WITHIN.

THERE was once a certain nobleman who had a house or castle situated in the midst of a great wilderness, but enclosed in a garden. Now there was a band of robbers in the wilderness who had a great mind to plunder and destroy the castle, but they had not succeeded in their endeavors, because the master had given strict orders to "*watch without ceasing.*" To quicken their vigilance he used to tell them that their care would soon have an end; that though the nights they had to watch were dark and stormy, yet they were but few; the period of resistance was short, that of rest would be eternal.

The robbers, however, attacked the castle in various ways. They tried at every avenue, watched to take advantage of every careless moment; looked for an open door or a neglected window. But though they often made the bolts shake and the windows rattle, they could never greatly hurt the house, much less get into it. Do you know the reason? it was because the servants were never off their guard. They heard the noises plain enough, and used to be not a little frightened, for they were aware both of the strength and perseverance of their enemies. But what seemed rather odd to some of these servants, the lord used to tell them, that while they continued to be afraid they would be safe; and it passed into a sort of proverb in that family, "Happy is he that feareth always." Some of the servants, however, thought this a contradiction.

One day, when the master was going from home, he

called his servants all together, and spoke to them as follows: "I will not repeat to you the directions I have so often given you; they are all written down in THE BOOK OF LAWS, of which every one of you has a copy. Remember, it is a very short time that you are to remain in this castle; you will soon remove to my more settled habitation, to a more durable house, not made with hands. As that house is never exposed to any attack, so it never stands in need of any repair; for that country is never infested by any sons of violence. Here you are servants; there you will be princes. But mark my words, and you will find the same in THE BOOK OF MY LAWS, whether you will ever attain to *that* house, will depend on the manner in which you defend yourselves in *this*. A stout vigilance for a short time will secure your certain happiness for ever. But everything depends on your present exertions. Don't complain and take advantage of my absence, and call me a hard master, and grumble that you are placed in the midst of a howling wilderness without peace or security. Say not, that you are exposed to temptations without any power to resist them. You have some difficulties, it is true, but you have many helps and many comforts to make this house tolerable, even before you get to the other. Yours is not a hard service; and if it were, 'the time is short.' You have arms if you will use them, and doors if you will bar them, and strength if you will use it. I would defy all the attacks of the robbers without, if I could depend on the fidelity of the people within. If the thieves ever get in and destroy the house, it must be by the connivance of one of the family. *For it is a standing law of this castle, that mere outward attack can never destroy it, if there be no consenting traitor within.* You will stand or fall as you will observe this rule. If you are finally happy, it will be by my grace and favor; if you are ruined, it will be your own fault."

When the nobleman had done speaking, every ser-

vant repeated his assurance of attachment and firm allegiance to his master. But among them all, not one was so vehement and loud in his professions as old Parley, the porter. Parley, indeed, it was well known, was always talking, which exposed him to no small danger ; for as he was the foremost to promise, so he was the slackest to perform : and, to speak the truth, though he was a civil-spoken fellow, his lord was more afraid of him, with all his professions, than he was of the rest who protested less. He knew that Parley was vain, credulous, and self-sufficient ; and he always apprehended more danger from Parley's impertinence, curiosity, and love of novelty, than even from the stronger vices of some of his other servants. The rest indeed, seldom got into any scrape, of which Parley was not the cause in some shape or other.

I am sorry to be obliged to confess, that though Parley was allowed every refreshment, and all the needful rest which the nature of his place permitted, yet he thought it very hard to be forced to be so constantly on duty. "Nothing but watching," said Parley. "I have, to be sure, many pleasures, and meat sufficient ; and plenty of chat, in virtue of my office, and I pick up a good deal of news of the comers and goers by day, but it is hard that at night I must watch as narrowly as a house-dog, and yet let in no company without orders ; only because there is said to be a few straggling *robbers* here in the wilderness, with whom my master does not care to let us be acquainted. He pretends to make us vigilant through fear of the robbers, but I suspect it is only to make us mope alone. A merry companion and a mug of beer would make the night pass cheerily." Parley, however, kept all these thoughts to himself, or uttered them only when no one heard, for talk he must. He began to listen to the nightly whistling of the robbers under the windows with rather less alarm than formerly and was sometimes so tired of watching, that he thought it was even better to run the risk of being

robbed once, than to live always in the fear of robbers.

There was certain bounds in which the lord allowed his servants to walk and divert themselves at all proper seasons. A pleasant garden surrounded the castle, and a thick hedge separated this garden from the wilderness, which was infested by the robbers; in this garden they were permitted to amuse themselves. The master advised them always to keep within these bounds. "While you observe this rule," said he, "you will be safe and well; and you will consult your own safety and happiness, as well as show your love to me, by not venturing over to the extremity of your bounds; he who goes as far as he dares, always shows a wish to go farther than he ought, and commonly does so."

It was remarkable, that the nearer these servants kept to the castle, and the farther from the *hedge*, the more ugly the wilderness appeared. And the nearer they approached the forbidden bounds, their own home appeared more dull, and the wilderness more delightful. And this the master knew when he gave his orders; for he never either did or said anything without a good reason. And when his servants sometimes desired an explanation of the reason, he used to tell them they would understand it when they came to *the other house*; for it was one of the pleasures of that house, that it would explain all the mysteries of this, and any little obscurities in the master's conduct would be then made quite plain.

Parley was the first who promised to keep clear of the *hedge*, and yet was often seen looking as near as he durst. One day he ventured close up to the hedge, put two or three stones one on another, and tried to peep over. He saw one of the robbers strolling as near as he could be on the forbidden side. This man's name was Mr. Flatterwell, a smooth civil man, "whose words were softer than butter, hav-

ing war in his heart." He made several low bows to Parley.

Now, Parley knew so little of the world, that he actually concluded all robbers must have an ugly look which should frighten you at once, and coarse brutal manners which would at first sight show they were enemies. He thought, like a poor ignorant fellow as he was, that this mild specious person could never be one of the band. Flatterwell accosted Parley with the utmost civility, which put him quite off his guard; for Parley had no notion that he could be an enemy who was so soft and civil. For an open foe he would have been prepared. Parley, however, after a little discourse drew this conclusion, that either Mr. Flatterwell could not be one of the gang, or that if he was, the robbers themselves could not be such monsters as his master had described, and therefore it was a folly to be afraid of them.

Flatterwell began, like a true adept in his art, by lulling all Parley's suspicions asleep; and instead of openly abusing his master, which would have opened Parley's eyes at once, he pretended rather to commend him in a general way, as a person who meant well himself, but was too apt to suspect others. To this Parley assented. The other then ventured to hint by degrees, that though the nobleman might be a good master in the main, yet he must say he was a little strict, and a little stingy, and not a little censorious. That he was blamed by the *gentlemen of the wilderness* for shutting his house against good company, and his servants were laughed at by people of spirit for submitting to the gloomy life of the castle, and the insipid pleasures of the garden, instead of ranging in the wilderness at large.

"It is true enough," said Parley, who was generally of the opinion of the person he was talking with, "my master *is* rather harsh and close. But to own the truth, all the barring, and locking, and bolting, is to keep out a set of gentlemen, who he assures us are

robbers, and who are waiting for an opportunity to destroy us. I hope no offence, sir, but by your livery I suspect you, sir, are one of the gang he is so much afraid of."

Flatterwell. Afraid of me? Impossible, dear Mr. Parley. You see, I do not look like an enemy. I am unarmed; what harm can a plain man like me do?

Parley. Why, that is true enough. Yet my master says, if we were to let you into the house, we should be ruined soul and body.

Flatterwell. I am sorry, Mr. Parley to hear so sensible a man as you are so deceived. This is mere prejudice. He knows we are cheerful entertaining people, foes to gloom and superstition, and therefore he is so morose he will not let you get acquainted with us.

Parley. Well; he says you are a band of thieves, gamblers, murderers, drunkards, and atheists.

Flatterwell. Don't believe him; the worst we should do, perhaps, is, we might drink a friendly glass with you to your master's health, or play an innocent game of cards just to keep you awake, or sing a cheerful song with the maids; now is there any harm in all this?

Parley. Not the least in the world. And I begin to think there is not a word of truth in all my master says.

Flatterwell. The more you know us, the more you will like us. But I wish there was not this ugly hedge between us. I have a great deal to say, and I am afraid of being overheard.

Parley was now just going to give a spring over the hedge, but checked himself, saying, "I dare not come on your side, there are people about and everything is carried to my master." Flatterwell saw by this that his new friend was kept on his own side of the hedge by fear rather than by principle, and from that moment he made sure of him. "Dear Mr. Parley," said he, "if you will allow me the honor of a little

conversation with you I will call under the window of your lodge this evening. I have something to tell you greatly to your advantage. I admire you exceedingly. I long for your friendship; our whole brotherhood is ambitious of being known to so amiable a person.”—“O dear,” said Parley, “I shall be afraid of talking to you at night. It is so against my master’s orders. But did you say you had something to tell me to my advantage?”

Flatterwell. Yes, I can point out to you how you may be a richer, a merrier, and a happier man. If you will admit me to-night under the window, I will convince you that it is prejudice and not wisdom, which makes your master bar his door against us; I will convince you that the mischief of a *robber*, as your master scurrilously calls us, is only in the name; that we are your true friends, and only mean to promote your happiness.

“Don’t say *we*,” said Parley, “pray come alone; I would not see the rest of the gang for the world; but I think there can be no great harm in talking to *you* through the bars, if you come alone; but I am determined not to let you in. Yet I can’t say but I wish to know what you can tell me so much to my advantage; indeed if it is for my good I ought to know it.”

Flatterwell (going out, turns back). Dear Mr. Parley, there is one thing I had forgotten. I can not get over the hedge at night without assistance. You know there is a secret in the nature of that hedge; you in the house may get over it into the wilderness of your own accord, but we can not get to your side by our own strength. You must look about to see where the hedge is thinnest, and then set to work to clear away here and there a little bough for me, it won’t be missed; and if there is but the smallest hole made on your side, those on ours can get through; otherwise we do but labor in vain. To this Parley made some objection, through the fear of being seen.

Flatterwell replied, that the smallest hole from within would be sufficient, for he could then work his own way. "Well," said Parley, "I will consider of it. To be sure I shall even then be equally safe in the castle, as I shall have all the bolts, bars, and locks, between us, so it will make but little difference."

"Certainly not," said Flatterwell, who knew it would make all the difference in the world. So they parted with mutual protestations of regard. Parley went home charmed with his new friend. His eyes were now clearly opened as to his master's prejudices against the *robbers*, and he was convinced there was more in the name than in the thing. "But," said he, "though Mr. Flatterwell is certainly an agreeable companion, he may not be so safe an inmate. There can, however, be no harm in talking at a distance, and I certainly won't let him in."

Parley, in the course of the day, did not forget his promise to thin the hedge of separation a little. At first he only tore off a handful of leaves, then a little sprig, then he broke away a bough or two. It was observable, the larger the breach became, the worse he began to think of his master, and the better of himself. Every peep he took through the broken hedge increased his desire to get out into the wilderness, and made the thoughts of the castle more irksome to him.

He was continually repeating to himself, "I wonder what Mr. Flatterwell can have to say so much to my advantage? I see he does not wish to hurt my master, he only wishes to serve me." As the hour of meeting, however, drew near, the master's orders now and then came across Parley's thoughts. So to divert them, he took up THE BOOK. He happened to open it at these words: "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not." For a moment his heart failed him. "If this admonition should be sent on purpose?" said he; "but no, 'tis a bugbear. My master told me that if I went to the bounds I should

get over the hedge. Now I went to the utmost limits, and did *not* get over." Here conscience put in; "Yes, but it was because you were watched."—"I am sure," continued Parley, "one may always stop where one will, and this is only a trick of my master's to spoil sport. So I will even hear what Mr. Flatterwell has to say so much to my advantage. I am not obliged to follow his counsels, but there can be no harm in hearing them."

Flatterwell prevailed on the rest of the robbers to make no public attack on the castle that night. "My brethren," said he, "you now and then fail in your schemes, because you are for violent beginnings, while my smoothing insinuating measures hardly ever miss. You come blustering and roaring, and frighten people and set them on their guard. You inspire them with terror of *you*, while my whole scheme is to make them think well of *themselves* and ill of their master. If I once get them to entertain hard thoughts of him, and high thoughts of themselves, my business is done, and they fall plump into my snares. So let this delicate affair alone to me: Parley is a softly fellow; he must not be frightened, but cajoled. He is the very sort of a man to succeed with; and worth a hundred of your sturdy sensible fellows. With them we want strong arguments and strong temptations; but with such fellows as Parley, in whom vanity and sensuality are the leading qualities (as, let me tell you, is the case with far the greater part), flattery and a promise of ease and pleasure, will do more than your whole battle array. If you will let me manage, I will get you all into the castle before midnight."

At night the castle was barricaded as usual, and no one had observed the hole which Parley had made in the hedge. This oversight arose that night from the servants' neglecting one of the master's standing orders—to make a nightly examination of the state of things. The neglect did not proceed so much from wilful disobedience, as from having passed the evening in sloth

and diversion, which often amounts to nearly the same in its consequences.

As all was very cheerful within, so all was very quiet without. And before they went to bed, some of the servants observed to the rest, that as they heard no robbers that night, they thought they might now begin to remit something of their diligence in bolting and barring : that all this fastening and locking was very troublesome, and they hoped the danger was now pretty well over. It was rather remarkable, that they never made these sort of observations, but after an evening of some excess, and when they had neglected their *private business with their master*. All, however, except Parley, went quietly to bed, and seemed to feel uncommon security.

Parley crept down to his lodge. He had half a mind to go to bed too. Yet he was not willing to disappoint Mr. Flatterwell. So civil a gentleman ! To be sure he might have had bad designs. Yet what right had he to suspect anybody who made such professions, and who was so very civil ? “ Besides, it is something for my advantage,” added Parley. “ I will not open the door, that is certain ; but as he is to come alone, he can do me no harm through the bars of the windows : and he will think I am a coward if I don’t keep my word. No, I will let him see that I am not afraid of my own strength ; I will show him I can go what length I please, and stop short *when* I please.” Had Flatterwell heard this boastful speech, he would have been quite sure of his man.

About eleven, Parley heard the signal agreed upon. It was so gentle as to cause little alarm. So much the worse. Flatterwell never frightened any one, and therefore seldom failed of any one. Parley stole softly down, planted himself at his little window, opened the casement, and spied his new friend. It was pale starlight. Parley was a little frightened ; for he thought he perceived one or two persons behind Flatterwell ; but the other assured him it was only his own shadow,

which his fears had magnified into a company. "Though I assure you," said he, "I have not a friend but what is as harmless as myself."

They now entered into serious discourse, in which Flatterwell showed himself a deep politician. He skilfully mixed up in his conversation a proper proportion of praise on the pleasures of the wilderness, of compliments to Parley, of ridicule on his master, and of abusive sneers on the BOOK in which the master's laws were written. Against this last he had always a particular spite, for he considered it as the grand instrument by which the lord maintained his servants in their allegiance; and when they could once be brought to sneer to the BOOK there was an end of submission to the lord. Parley had not penetration enough to see his drift. "As to the BOOK, Mr. Flatterwell," said he, "I do not know whether it be true or false. I rather neglect than disbelieve it. I am forced, indeed, to hear it read once a week, but I never look into it myself, if I can help it."—"Excellent," said Flatterwell to himself, "that is just the same thing. This is safe ground for me. For whether a man does not believe in the BOOK, or does not attend to it, it comes pretty much to the same, and I generally get him at last."

"Why can not we be a little nearer, Mr. Parley," said Flatterwell; "I am afraid of being overheard by some of your master's spies. The window from which you speak is so high; I wish you would come down to the door."—"Well," said Parley, "I see no great harm in that. There is a little wicket in the door through which we may converse with more ease and equal safety. The same fastenings will be still between us." So down he went, but not without a degree of fear and trembling.

The little wicket being now opened, and Flatterwell standing close on the outside of the door, they conversed with great ease. "Mr. Parley," said Flatterwell, "I should not have pressed you so much to ad-

mit me into the castle, but out of pure disinterested regard to your own happiness. I shall get nothing by it, but I can not bear to think that a person so wise and amiable should be shut up in this gloomy dungeon, under a hard master, and a slave to the unreasonably tyranny of his BOOK OF LAWS. If you admit me, you need have no more waking, no more watching." Here Parley involuntarily slipped back the bolt of the door. "To convince you of my true love," continued Flatterwell, "I have brought a bottle of the most delicious wine that grows in the wilderness. You shall taste it, but you must put a glass through the wicket to receive it, for it is a singular property in this wine, that we of the wilderness can not succeed in conveying it to you of the castle, without you hold out a vessel to receive it."—"O here is a glass," said Parley, holding out a large goblet, which he always kept ready to be filled by any chance-comer. The other immediately poured into the capacious goblet a large draught of that delicious intoxicating liquor, with which the family of the Flatterwells have for near six thousand years gained the hearts, and destroyed the souls of all the inhabitants of the castle, whenever they have been able to prevail on them to hold out a hand to receive it. This the wise master of the castle well knew would be the case, for he knew what was in men; he knew their propensity to receive the delicious poison of the Flatterwells; and it was for this reason that he gave them THE BOOK of his laws, and planted the hedge and invented the bolts, and doubled the lock.

As soon as poor Parley had swallowed the fatal draught, it acted like enchantment. He at once lost all power of resistance. He had no sense of fear left. He despised his own safety, forgot his master, lost all sight of the house in the other country, and reached out for another draught as eagerly as Flatterwell held out the bottle to administer it. "What a fool, have I been," said Parley, "to deny myself so long!"—"Will you now let me in?" said Flatterwell. "Ay, that I

will," said the deluded Parley. Though the train was now increased to nearly a hundred robbers, yet so intoxicated was Parley, that he did not see one of them except his new friend. Parley eagerly pulled down the bars, drew back the bolts and forced open the locks; thinking he could never let in his friend soon enough. He had, however, just presence of mind to say, "My dear friend, I hope you are alone." Flatterwell swore he was—Parley opened the door—in rushed, not Flatterwell only, but the whole banditti, who always lurked behind in his train. The moment they had got sure possession, Flatterwell changed his soft tone, and cried in a voice of thunder, "Down with the castle—kill, burn, and destroy."

Rapine, murder, and conflagration, by turns took place. Parley was the very first whom they attacked. He was overpowered with wounds. As he fell he cried out, "O my master, I die a victim to my unbelief in thee, and to my own vanity and imprudence. O that the guardians of all other castles would hear me with my dying breath repeat my master's admonition, that *all attacks from without will not destroy unless there is some confederate within*. O that the keepers of all other castles would learn from my ruin, that he who parleys with temptation is already undone. That he who allows himself to go to the very bounds will soon jump over the hedge; that he who talks out of the window with the enemy, will soon open the door to him; that he who holds out his hand for the cup of sinful flattery, loses all power of resisting; that when he opens the door to one sin, all the rest fly in upon him, and the man perishes as I now do."

III. ALL FOR THE BEST.

“IT is all for the best,” said Mrs. Simpson, whenever any misfortune befell her. She had got such a habit of vindicating Providence, that instead of weeping and wailing under the most trying dispensations, her chief care was to convince herself and others, that however great might be her sufferings, and however little they could be accounted for at present, yet that the Judge of all the earth could not but do right. Instead of trying to clear herself from any possible blame that might attach to her under those misfortunes which, to speak after the manner of men, she might seem not to have *deserved*, she was always the first to justify Him who had inflicted it. It was not that she superstitiously converted every visitation into a *punishment*: she entertained more correct ideas of that God who overrules all events. She knew that some calamities were sent to exercise her faith, others to purify her heart; some to chastise her rebellious will, and all to remind her that this “was not her rest;” that this world was not the scene, for the full and final display of retributive justice. The honor of God was dearer to her than her own credit, and her chief desire was to turn all events to his glory.

Though Mrs. Simpson was the daughter of a clergyman, and the widow of a genteel tradesman, she had been reduced by a succession of misfortunes, to accept of a room in an alms-house. Instead of repining at the change; instead of dwelling on her former gentility and saying, “how handsomely she had lived once; and how hard it was to be reduced; and she little thought ever to end her days in an alms-house;” which is the common language of those who were never so well off before; she was thankful that such an asylum was provided for want and age; and blessed God that it was

to the Christian dispensation alone that such pious institutions owed their birth.

One fine evening, as she was sitting reading her Bible on the little bench shaded with honeysuckles, just before her door, who should come and sit down by her Mrs. Betty, who had formerly been lady's maid at the nobleman's house in the village of which Mrs. Simpson's father had been minister.—Betty, after a life of vanity, was, by a train of misfortunes, brought to this very alms-house; and though she had taken no care by frugality and prudence to avoid it, she thought it a hardship and disgrace, instead of being thankful, as she ought to have been, for such a retreat. At first she did not know Mrs. Simpson; her large bonnet, cloak, and brown stuff gown (for she always made her appearance conform to her circumstances) being very different from the dress she had been used to wear when Mrs. Betty has seen her dining at the great house; and time and sorrow had much altered her countenance. But when Mrs. Simpson kindly addressed her as an old acquaintance, she screamed with surprise—"What! you, madam?" cried she: "you in an alms-house, living on charity: you, who used to be so charitable yourself, that you never suffered any distress in the parish which you could prevent?" "That may be one reason, Betty," replied Mrs. Simpson, "why Providence has provided this refuge for my old age.—And my heart overflows with gratitude when I look back on his goodness." "No such great goodness, methinks," said Betty; "why you were born and bred a lady, and are now reduced to live in an alms-house." "Betty, I was born and bred a sinner, undeserving of the mercies I have received." "No such great mercies," said Betty. "Why, I heard you had been turned out of doors; that your husband had broke; and that you had been in danger of starving, thought I did not know what was become of you." "It is all true, Betty, glory be to God! it is all true."

“Well,” said Betty, “you are an odd sort of a gentlewoman. If from a prosperous condition I had been made a bankrupt, a widow, and a beggar, I should have thought it no such mighty matter to be thankful for: but there is no accounting for taste. The neighbors used to say that all your troubles must needs be a judgment upon you; but I who knew how good you were, thought it very hard you should suffer so much; but now I see you reduced to the almshouse, I beg your pardon, madam, but I am afraid the neighbors were in the right, and that so many misfortunes could never have happened to you without you had committed a great many sins to deserve them; for I always thought that God is so just that he punishes us for all our bad actions, and rewards us for all our good ones.” “So he does, Betty; but he does it in his own way, and at his own time, and not according to our notions of good and evil; for his ways are not as our ways.—God, indeed, punishes the bad, and rewards the good; but he does not do it fully and finally in this world. Indeed he does not set such a value on outward things as to make riches, and rank, and beauty, and health, the reward of piety; that would be acting like weak and erring men, and not like a just and holy God. Our belief in a future state of rewards and punishments is not always so strong as it ought to be, even now; but how totally would our faith fail, if we regularly saw everything made even in this world. We shall lose nothing by having pay-day put off. The longest voyages make the best returns. So far am I from thinking that God is less just, and future happiness less certain, because I see the wicked sometimes prosper, and the righteous suffer in this world, that I am rather led to believe that God is more just and heaven more certain: for, in the first place, God will not put off his favorite children with so poor a lot as the good things of this world; and next, seeing that the best men here below do not often attain to the best things; why it only serves to strengthen my belief

that they are not the best things in his eye; and he has most assuredly reserved for those that love him such 'good things as eye has not seen nor ear heard.' God, by keeping man in Paradise while he was innocent, and turning him into this world as soon as he had sinned, gave a plain proof that he never intended the world, even in its happiest state, as a place of reward. My father gave me good principles and useful knowledge; and while he taught me by a habit of constant employment, to be, if I may so say, independent of the world; yet he led me to a constant sense of dependence on God." "I do not see, however," interrupted Mrs. Betty, "that your religion has been of any use to you. It has been so far from preserving you from trouble, that I think you have had more than the usual share."

"No," said Mrs. Simpson; "nor did Christianity ever pretend to exempt its followers from trouble; this is no part of the promise. Nay, the contrary is rather stipulated; 'in the world ye shall have tribulation.'—But if it has not taught me to escape sorrow, I humbly hope it has taught me how to bear it. If it has taught me not to feel, it has taught me not to murmur. I will tell you a little of my story. As my father could save little or nothing for me, he was very desirous of seeing me married to a young gentleman in the neighborhood, who expressed a regard for me. But while he was anxiously engaged in bringing this about, my good father died."

"How very unlucky!" interrupted Betty.

"No, Betty," replied Mrs. Simpson, "it was very providential; this man, though he maintained a decent character, had a good fortune, and lived soberly, yet he would not have made me happy." "Why what could you want more of a man?" said Betty. "Religion," returned Mrs. Simpson. "As my father made a creditable appearance, and was very charitable; and as I was an only child, this gentleman concluded that he could give me a considerable fortune;

for he did not know that all the poor in his parish are the children of every pious clergyman. Finding I had little or nothing left me, he withdrew his attentions." "What a sad thing!" cried Betty. "No, it was all for the best; Providence overruled his covetousness for my good. I could not have been happy with a man whose soul was set on the perishable things of this world; nor did I esteem him, though I labored to submit my own inclinations to those of my kind father. The very circumstance of being left penniless produced the direct contrary effect on Mr. Simpson: he was a sensible young man, engaged in a prosperous business: we had long highly valued each other; but while my father lived, he thought me above his hopes. We were married; I found him an amiable, industrious, good-tempered man; he respected religion and religious people; but with excellent dispositions, I had the grief to find him less pious than I had hoped. He was ambitious, and a little too much immersed in worldly schemes; and though I knew it was all done for my sake, yet that did not blind me so far as to make me think it right. He attached himself so eagerly to business, that he thought every hour lost in which he was not doing something that would tend to raise me to what he called my proper rank. The more prosperous he grew the less religious he became; and I began to find that one might be unhappy with a husband one tenderly loved. One day as he was standing on some steps to reach down a parcel of goods he fell from the top and broke his leg in two places."

"What a dreadful misfortune!" said Mrs. Betty.—
"What a signal blessing!" said Mrs. Simpson. "Here I am sure I had reason to say all was for the best; from that very hour in which my outward troubles began, I date the beginning of my happiness. Severe suffering, a near prospect of death, absence from the world, silence, reflection, and above all, the divine blessings on the prayers and scriptures I read to him,

were the means used by our merciful Father to turn my husband's heart.—During this confinement he was awakened to a deep sense of his own sinfulness, of the vanity of all this world has to bestow, and of his great need of a Savior. It was many months before he could leave his bed; during this time his business was neglected. His principal clerk took advantage of his absence to receive large sums of money in his name, and absconded. On hearing of this great loss, our creditors came faster upon us than we could answer their demands; they grew more impatient as we were less able to satisfy them; one misfortune followed another; till at length Mr. Simpson became a bankrupt."

"What an evil!" exclaimed Mrs. Betty. "Yet it led in the end to much good," resumed Mrs. Simpson. "We were forced to leave the town in which we had lived with so much credit and comfort, and to betake ourselves to a mean lodging in a neighboring village, till my husband's strength should be recruited, and till we could have time to look about us and see what was to be done. The first night we got to this poor dwelling, my husband felt very sorrowful, not for his own sake, but that he had brought so much poverty on me, whom he had so dearly loved: I, on the contrary, was unusually cheerful: for the blessed change in his mind had more than reconciled me to the sad change in his circumstances. I was contented to live with him in a poor cottage for a few years on earth, if it might contribute to our spending a blessed eternity together in heaven. I said to him, 'Instead of lamenting that we are now reduced to want all the comforts of life, I have sometimes been almost ashamed to live in the full enjoyments of them, when I have reflected that my Savior not only chose to deny himself all these enjoyments, but even to live a life of hardship for my sake; not one of his numerous miracles tended to his own comfort; and though we read at different times that he both hungered and thirsted,

yet it was not for his own gratification that he once changed water into wine; and I have often been struck with the near position of that chapter in which this miracle is recorded, to that in which he thirsted for a draught of water at the well in Samaria.* It was for others, not himself, that even the humble sustenance of barley bread was multiplied. See here, we have a bed left us ;' I had, indeed, nothing but straw to stuff it with, but the Savior of the world, ' had not where to lay his head.' My husband smiled through his tears, and we sat down to supper ; It consisted of a roll and a bit of cheese which I had brought with me, and we ate it thankfully. Seeing Mr. Simpson beginning to relapse into distrust, the following conversation as nearly as I can remember, took place between us. He began by remarking, that it was a mysterious Providence that he had been less prosperous since he had been less attached to the world, and that his endeavors had not been followed by that success which usually attends industry. I took the liberty to reply : ' Your heavenly Father sees on which side your danger lies, and is mercifully bringing you, by these disappointments, to trust less in the world and more in himself. My dear Mr. Simpson,' added I, ' we trust everybody but God. As children we obey our parents implicitly, because we are taught to believe all is for our good which they command or forbid. If we undertake a voyage, we trust entirely to the skill and conduct of the pilot ; we never torment ourselves in thinking he will carry us east, when he has promised to carry us west. If a dear and tried friend makes us a promise, we depend on him for the performance, and do not wound his feelings by our suspicions. When you used to go your annual journey to London, in the mail-coach, you confided yourself to the care of the coachman, that he would carry you where he had engaged to do so ; you were not anxiously watching him, and distrusting and inquiring

* John, chap. ii ; and chap. iv.

at every turning. When the doctor sends home your medicine, don't you so fully trust in his ability and good will, that you swallow it down in full confidence? You never think of inquiring what are the ingredients, why they are mixed in that particular way, why there is more of one and less of another, and why they are bitter instead of sweet! If one does not cure you, he orders another, and changes the medicine when he sees the first does you no good, or that by long use the same medicine has lost its effect; if the weaker fails he prescribes a stronger: you swallow all, you submit to all, never questioning the skill or the kindness of the physician. God is the only being whom we do not trust, though he is the only one who is fully competent, both in will and power, to fulfil all his promises; and who has solemnly and repeatedly pledged himself to fulfil them in those Scriptures which we receive as his revealed will.'

"Mr. Simpson thanked me for my little sermon, as he called it; but said at the same time, that what made my exhortations produce a powerful effect on his mind was, the patient cheerfulness with which he was pleased to say I bore my share in our misfortunes. A submissive behavior, he said, was the best practical illustration of a real faith. When he had thanked God for our supper, we prayed together; after which we read the eleventh chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews. When my husband had finished it, he said, 'Surely if God's chief favorites have been martyrs, is not that a sufficient proof that this world is not a place of happiness, no earthly prosperity the reward of virtue. Shall we after reading this chapter, complain of our petty trials? Shall we not rather be thankful that our affliction is so light?'

"Next day Mr. Simpson walked out in search of some employment, by which we might be supported. He got a recommendation to Mr. Thomas, an opulent farmer and factor, who had large concerns, and wanted a skilful person to assist him in keeping his accounts.

This we thought a fortunate circumstance ; for we found that the salary would serve to procure us at least all the necessaries of life. The farmer was so pleased with Mr. Simpson's quickness, regularity, and good sense, that he offered us, of his own accord, a little neat cottage of his own, which happened to be vacant, and told us we should live rent free, and promised to be a friend to us."—"All *does* seem for the best now, indeed ;" interrupted Mrs. Betty.—"We shall see," said Mrs. Simpson, and thus went on.

"I now became very easy and very happy ; and was cheerfully employed in putting our few things in order, and making everything look to the best advantage. My husband, who wrote all the day for his employer, in the evening assisted me in doing up our little garden. This was a source of much pleasure to us ; we both loved a garden, and we were not only contented but cheerful. Our employer had been absent some weeks on his annual journey. He came home on a Saturday night, and the next morning sent for Mr. Simpson to come and settle his accounts, which were got behind-hand by his long absence. We were just going to church, and Mr. Simpson sent back word, that he would call and speak to him on his way home. A second message followed, ordering him to come to the farmer's directly : he agreed that he would walk round that way, and that my husband should call and excuse his attendance.

"The farmer more ignorant and worse educated than his ploughman, with all that pride and haughtiness which the possession of wealth without knowledge or religion is apt to give, rudely asked my husband what he meant by sending him word that he would not come to him till the next day ; and insisted that he should stay and settle the accounts then. 'Sir,' said my husband, in a very respectful manner, 'I am on my road to church, and am afraid I shall be too late.' 'Are you so ?' said the farmer ; 'do you know who sent for you ? You may, however, go to church, if

you will, so you make haste back; and, d'ye hear, you may leave your accounts with me, as I conclude you have brought them with you; I will look them over by the time you return, and then you and I can do all I want to have done to-day in about a couple of hours, and I will give you home some letters to copy for me in the evening.' 'Sir,' answered my husband, 'I dare not obey you; it is Sunday.' 'And so you refuse to settle my accounts only because it is Sunday.' 'Sir,' replied Mr. Simpson, 'if you would give me a handful of silver and gold I dare not break the commandment of my God.' 'Well,' said the farmer, 'but this is not breaking the commandment; I don't order you to drive my cattle, or to work in my garden, or to do anything which you might fancy would be a bad example.' 'Sir,' replied my husband, 'the example indeed goes a great way, but it is not the first object. The deed is wrong in itself.' 'Well, but I shall not keep you from church; and when you have been there, there is no harm in doing a little business, or taking a little pleasure the rest of the day.' 'Sir,' answered my husband, 'the commandment does not say thou shalt keep holy the Sabbath *morning*, but the Sabbath *day*.' 'Get out of my house, you puritanical rascal, and out of my cottage too,' said the farmer; 'for if you refuse to do my work, I am not bound to keep my engagement with you; as you will not obey me as a master, I shall not pay you as a servant.' 'Sir,' said Mr. Simpson, 'I would gladly obey you, but I have a Master in heaven whom I dare not disobey.' 'Then let him find employment for you,' said the enraged farmer; 'for I fancy you will get but poor employment on earth with these scrupulous notions, and so send home my papers, directly, and pack off out the parish.' 'Out of your cottage,' said my husband, 'I certainly will; but as to the parish, I hope I may remain in that if I can find employment.' 'I will make it too hot to hold you,' replied the farmer, 'so you had

better troop off bag and baggage : for I am overseer, and as you are sickly, it is my duty not to let any vagabonds stay in the parish who are likely to become chargeable.'

"By the time my husband returned home, for he found it too late to go to church, I had got our little dinner ready, it was a better one than we had for a long while been accustomed to see, and I was unusually cheerful at this improvement in our circumstances. I saw his eyes full of tears, and oh ! with what pain did he bring himself to tell me that it was the last dinner we must ever eat in this house. I took his hand with a smile, and only said, 'The Lord gave and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord.' 'Notwithstanding this sudden stroke of injustice,' said my husband, 'this is still a happy country. Our employer, it is true, may turn us out at a moment's notice, because it is his own, but he has no further power over us ; he can not confine or punish us. His riches it is true, give him power to insult, but not to oppress us. The same laws to which the affluent resort, protect *us* also. And as to our being driven out from a cottage, how many persons of the highest rank have lately been driven out from their palaces and castles ; persons too, born in a station which we never enjoyed, and used to all the indulgences of that rank and wealth we never knew, are at this moment wandering over the face of the earth, without a house or without bread, exiles and beggars ; while we, blessed be God, are in our own native land ; we have still our liberty, our limbs, the protection of just and equal laws, our churches, our Bibles, and our Sabbaths.'

"This happy state of my husband's mind hushed my sorrows, and I never once murmured ; nay, I sat down to dinner with a degree of cheerfulness, endeavoring to cast all our care on 'Him that careth for us.' We had begged to stay till the next morning, as Sunday was not the day on which we liked to

remove; but we were ordered not to sleep another night in that house; so as we had little to carry, we marched off in the evening to the poor lodging we had before occupied. The thought that my husband had cheerfully renounced his little all for conscience sake, gave an unspeakable serenity to my mind; and I felt thankful that though cast down we were not forsaken: nay, I felt a lively gratitude to God, that while I doubted not he would accept this little sacrifice, as it was heartily made for his sake, he had graciously forborne to call us to greater trials."

"And so you were turned adrift once more? Well, ma'am, saving your presence, I hope you won't be such a fool as to say all was for the best now." "Yes, Betty: he who does all things well, now made his kind Providence more manifest than ever. That very night, while we were sweetly sleeping in our poor lodging, the pretty cottage, out of which we were so unkindly driven, was burned to the ground by a flash of lightning which caught the thatch, and so completely consumed the whole little building that had it not been for the merciful Providence who thus overruled the cruelty of the farmer for the preservation of our lives, we must have been burned to ashes with the house. 'It was the Lord's doing, and it was marvellous in our eyes.'—'O that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness, and for all the wonders, that he doeth for the children of men!'

"I will not tell you all the trials and afflictions which befell us afterward. I would also spare my heart the sad story of my husband's death."—"Well, that was another blessing too, I suppose," said Betty. "Oh, it was the severest trial ever sent me!" replied Mrs. Simpson, a few tears quietly stealing down her face. "I almost sunk under it. Nothing but the abundant grace of God could have carried me through such a visitation; and yet I now feel it to be the greatest mercy I ever experienced; he was my idol; no trouble ever came near my heart while he was with

me. I got more credit than I deserved for my patience under trials, which were easily borne while he who shared and lightened them was spared to me. I had indeed prayed and struggled to be weaned from this world, but still my affection for him tied me down to the earth with a strong cord: and though I did earnestly try to keep my eyes fixed on the eternal world, yet I viewed it with too feeble a faith; I viewed it at too great a distance. I found it difficult to realize it—I had deceived myself. I had fancied that I bore my troubles so well from the pure love of God, but I have since found that my love for my husband had too great a share in reconciling me to every difficulty which I underwent for him. I lost him, the charm was broken, the cord which tied me down to earth was cut, this world had nothing left to engage me. Heaven had now no rival in my heart. Though my love of God had always been sincere, yet I found there wanted this blow to make it perfect. But though all that had made life pleasant to me was gone, I did not sink as those who have no hope. I prayed that I might still in this trying conflict, be enabled to adorn the doctrine of God my Savior.

“After many more hardships, I was at length so happy as to get an asylum in this alms-house. Here my cares are at an end, but not my duties.” “Now you are wrong again,” interrupted Mrs. Betty, “your duty is now to take care of yourself: for I am sure you have nothing to spare.” “There *you* are mistaken again,” said Mrs. Simpson. “People are so apt to fancy that money is all in all, that all the other gifts of Providence are overlooked as things of no value. I have here a great deal of leisure; a good part of this I devote to the wants of those who are more distressed than myself. I work a little for the old, and I instruct the young. My eyes are good; this enables me to read the Bible either to those whose sight is decayed, or who were never taught to read. I have tolerable health; so that I am able occasionally

to sit up with the sick ; in the intervals of nursing, I can pray with them. In my younger days I thought it not much to sit up late for my pleasure ; shall I now think much of sitting up now and then to watch by a dying bed ? My Savior waked and watched for me in the garden and on the mount ; and shall I do nothing for his suffering members ? It is only by keeping his sufferings in view that we can truly practise charity to others, or exercise self-denial to ourselves."

"Well," said Mrs. Betty, "I think if I had lived in such genteel life as you have done, I could never be reconciled to an alms-house ; and I am afraid I should never forgive any of those who were the cause of sending me there, particularly that Farmer Thomas who turned you out of doors."

"Betty," said Mrs. Simpson, "I not only forgive him heartily, but I remember him in my prayers, as one of those instruments with which it has pleased God to work for my good. Oh ! never put off forgiveness to a dying bed ! When people come to die, we often see how the conscience is troubled with sins, of which before they hardly felt the existence. How ready are they to make restitution of ill-gotten gain ; and this perhaps for two reasons ; from a feeling conviction that it can be of no use to them where they are going, as well as from a near view of their own responsibility. We also hear from the most hardened, of death-bed forgiveness of enemies. Even malefactors at Tyburn forgive. But why must we wait for a dying bed to do what ought to be done now ? Believe me, that scene will be so full of terror and amazement to the soul, that we had not need load it with unnecessary business."

Just as Mrs. Simpson was saying these words, a letter was brought her from the minister of the parish where the farmer lived, by whom Mr. Simpson had been turned out of his cottage. The letter was as follows :—

“MADAM—I write to tell you that your old oppressor, Mr. Thomas, is dead. I attended him in his last moments. O, may my latter end never be like his! I shall not soon forget his despair at the approach of death. His riches, which had been his sole joy, now doubled his sorrows; for he was going where they could be of no use to him; and he found too late that he had laid up no treasure in heaven. He felt great concern at his past life, but for nothing more than his unkindness to Mr. Simpson. He charged me to find you out, and let you know that by his will he bequeathed you five hundred pounds as some compensation. He died in great agonies; declaring with his last breath, that if he could live his life over again, he would serve God and strictly observe the sabbath..

“Yours, &c.

“J. JOHNSON.”

Mrs. Betty, who had listened attentively to the letter, jumped up, clapped her hands, and cried out, “Now all *is* for the best, and I shall see you a lady once more.” “I am, indeed, thankful for this money,” said Mrs. Simpson, “and am glad that riches were not sent me till I had learned, as I humbly hope, to make a right use of them. But come, let us go in, for I am very cold, and find I have sat too long in the night air.”

Betty was now ready enough to acknowledge the hand of Providence in this prosperous event, though she was blind to it when the dispensation was more dark. Next morning she went early to visit Mrs. Simpson, but not seeing her below, she went up stairs, where, to her great sorrow, she found her confined to her bed by a fever, caught the night before by sitting so late on the bench reading the letter and talking it over. Betty was now more ready to cry out against Providence than ever. “What! to catch a fever while you were reading that very letter which told you about your good fortune; which would have

enabled you to live like a lady as you are. I never will believe this is for the best ; to be deprived of life just as you were beginning to enjoy it !”

“ Betty,” said Mrs. Simpson, “ we must learn not to rate health or life itself too highly. There is little in life, for its own sake, to be so fond of. As a good archbishop used to say, ‘ ’tis but the same thing over again, or probably worse : so many more nights and days, summers and winters ; a repetition of the same pleasures, but with less relish for them ; a return of the same or greater pains, but with less strength, and perhaps less patience to bear them.’ ” “ Well,” replied Betty, “ I did think that Providence was at last giving you your reward.” “ Reward !” cried Mrs. Simpson ; “ O, no ! my merciful Father will not put me off with so poor a portion as wealth ; I feel I shall die.” “ It is very hard, indeed,” said Betty, “ so good as you are, to be taken off just as your prosperity was beginning.” “ You think I am good just now,” said Mrs. Simpson, “ because I am prosperous. Success is no sure mark of God’s favor ; at this rate, you, who judge by outward things, would have thought Herod a better man than John the Baptist ; and if I may be allowed to say so, you, on your principles, that the sufferer is the sinner, would have believed Pontius Pilate higher in God’s favor, than the Savior whom he condemned to die, for your sins and mine.”

In a few days Mrs. Betty found that her new friend was dying, and though she was struck at her resignation, she could not forbear murmuring that so good a woman should be taken away at the very instant when she came into possession of so much money. “ Betty,” said Mrs. Simpson in a feeble voice, “ I believe you love me dearly, you would do anything to cure me ; yet you do not love me so well as God loves me, though *you* would raise me up, and he is putting a period to my life. He has never sent me a single stroke which was not absolutely necessary for

me. You, if you could restore me, might be laying me open to some temptation from which God, by removing, will deliver me. Your kindness in making this world so smooth for me, I might for ever have deplored in a world of misery. God's grace in afflicting me, will hereafter be the subject of my praises in a world of blessedness. Betty," added the dying woman, "do you really think that I am going to a place of rest and joy eternal?" "To be sure I do," said Betty. "Do you firmly believe that I am going to the assembly of the first-born; to the spirits of just men made perfect, to God the judge of all; and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant?" "I am sure you are," said Betty. "And yet," resumed she, "you would detain me from all this happiness; and you think my merciful Father is using me unkindly by removing me from a world of sin, and sorrow, and temptation, to such joys as have not entered into the heart of man to conceive; while it would have better suited your notions of reward to defer my entrance into the blessedness of heaven, that I might have enjoyed a legacy of a few hundred pounds! Believe my dying words—ALL IS FOR THE BEST."

Mrs. Simpson expired soon after, in a frame of mind which convinced her new friend, that "God's ways are not as our ways."

IV. TOM WHITE, THE POST BOY.

TOM WHITE was one of the best drivers of a post-chaise on the Bath road. Tom was the son of an honest laborer at a little village in Wiltshire : he was an active industrious boy, and as soon as he was old enough he left his father, who was burdened with a numerous family, and went to live with Farmer Hodges, a sober worthy man in the same village. He drove the wagon all the week ; and on Sundays, though he was not grown up, the Farmer required him to attend the Sunday school, carried on under the inspection of Dr. Shepherd, the worthy vicar, and always made him read his Bible in the evening after he had served his cattle ; and would have turned him out of his service if he had ever gone to the ale-house for his own pleasure.

Tom by carrying some wagon loads of fagots to the Bear inn, at Devizes, made many acquaintances in the stable-yard. He soon learnt to compare his own carter's frock, and shoes thick set with nails, with the smart red jacket, and tight boots of the post-boys, and grew ashamed of his own homely dress ; he was resolved to drive a chaise, to get money, and to see the world. Foolish fellow ! he never considered that, though it is true, a wagoner works hard all day, yet he gets a quiet evening at home, and undisturbed rest at night. However, as there must be chaise-boys as well as plough-boys, there was no great harm in the change. The evil company to which it exposed him, was the chief mischief. He left Farmer Hodges, through not without sorrow at quitting so kind a master, and got himself hired at the Black Bear.

Notwithstanding the temptations to which he was now exposed, Tom's good education stood by him for

some time. At first he was frightened to hear the oaths and wicked words which are too often uttered in a stable-yard. However, though he thought it very wrong, he had not the courage to reprove it, and the next step to being easy at seeing others sin is to sin ourselves. By degrees he began to think it manly, and a mark of spirit in others, to swear; though the force of good habits was so strong, that at first when he ventured to swear himself it was with fear, and in a low voice. But he was soon laughed out of his sheepishness, as they called it; and though he never became so profane and blasphemous as some of his companions (for he never swore in cool blood, or in mirth, as so many do) yet he would too often use a dreadful bad word when he was in a passion with his horses. And here I can not but drop a hint on the deep folly, as well as wickedness, of being in a great rage with poor beasts, who, not having the gift of reason, can not be moved like human creatures, with all the wicked words that are said to them; though these dumb creatures, unhappily, having the gift of feeling, suffer as much as human creatures can do, at the cruel and unnecessary beatings given them. Tom had been bred up to think that drunkenness was a great sin, for he never saw Farmer Hodges drunk in his life, and where a farmer is sober himself his men are less likely to drink, or if they do the master can reprove them with the better grace.

Tom was not naturally fond of drink, yet for the sake of being thought merry company, and a hearty fellow, he often drank more than he ought. As he had been used to go to church twice on a Sunday, while he lived with the farmer (who seldom used his horses on that day, except to carry his wife to church behind him) Tom felt a little uneasy when he was sent the very first Sunday a long journey with a great family; for I can not conceal the truth, that too many gentlefolks will travel, when there is no necessity for it, on a Sunday, and when Monday would answer the

end just as well. This is a great grief to all good and sober people, both rich and poor; and it is still more inexcusable in the great, who have every day at their command. However, he kept his thoughts to himself, though he could not now and then help thinking how quietly things were going on at the farmer's, whose waggoner on a Sunday led as easy life as if he had been a gentleman. But he soon lost all thoughts of this kind, and in time did not know a Sunday from a Monday. Tom went on prosperously, as it is called, for three or four years, got plenty of money, but saved not a shilling. As soon as his horses were once in the stable, whoever would might see them fed for Tom. He had other fish to fry.—Fives, cards, cudgel-playing, laying wagers, and keeping loose company, each of which he at first disliked, and each of which he soon learned to practise, ran away with all his money, and all his spare time; and though he was generally in the way as soon as the horses were ready (because if there was no driving there was no pay) yet he did not care whether the carriage was clean or dirty, if the horses looked well or ill, if the harness was whole, or the horses were shod. The certainty that the gains of to-morrow would make up for the extravagance of to-day, made him quite thoughtless and happy; for he was young, active, and healthy, and never foresaw that a rainy day might come, when he would want what he now squandered.

One day being a little flustered with liquor as he was driving his return chaise through Brentford, he saw just before him another empty carriage, driven by one of his acquaintance: he whipped up his horses, resolving to outstrip the other, and swearing dreadfully that he would be at the Red Lion first—for a pint.—“Done,” cried the other—a wager. Both cut and spurred the poor beasts with the usual fury, as if their credit had been really at stake, or the lives had depended on this foolish contest. Tom's chaise had now got up to that of his rival, and they drove along—

side of each other with great fury and many imprecations. But in a narrow part Tom's chaise being in the middle, with his antagonist on one side, and a cart driving against him on the other, the horses reared, the carriages got entangled; Tom roared out a great oath to the other to stop, which he either could not, or would not do, but returned a horrid imprecation that he would win the wager if he was alive.—Tom's horses took fright, and he himself was thrown to the ground with great violence.—As soon as he could be got from under the wheels, he was taken up senseless, his leg was broken in two places, and his body much bruised. Some people whom the noise had brought together, put him in the post-chaise in which the wagoner kindly assisted, but the other driver seemed careless and indifferent, and drove off, observing with a brutal coolness, "I am sorry I have lost my pint; I should have beat him hollow, had it not been for this *little accident*." Some gentlemen who came out of the inn, after reprimanding this savage, inquired who he was, wrote to inform his master, and got him discharged: resolved that neither they nor any of their friends would ever employ him, and he was long out of place, and nobody ever cared to be driven by him.

Tom was taken to one of those excellent hospitals with which London abounds. His agonies were dreadful, his leg was set, and a high fever came on. As soon as he was left alone to reflect on his condition, his first thought was that he should die, and his horror was inconceivable. Alas! said he, what will become of my poor soul? I am cut off in the very commission of three great sins: I was drunk, I was in a horrible passion, and I had oaths and blasphemies in my mouth. He tried to pray, but he could not; his mind was all distraction, and he thought he was so very wicked that God would not forgive him; because, says he, I have sinned against light and knowledge; I have had a sober education, and good examples; I was bred in the fear of God, and

the knowledge of Christ, and I deserve nothing but punishment. At length he grew light-headed, and there was little hope of his life. Whenever he came to his senses for a few minutes, he cried out, O ! that my old companions could now see me, surely they would take warning by my sad fate, and repent before it is too late.

By the blessing of God on the skill of the surgeon, and the care of the nurses, he, however, grew better in a few days. And here let me stop to remark, what a mercy it is that we live in a Christian country, where the poor, when sick, or lame, or wounded, are taken as much care of as any gentry ; nay, in some respects more, because in hospitals and infirmaries there are more doctors and surgeons to attend, than most private gentlefolks can afford to have at their own houses, whereas *there never was an hospital in the whole heathen world*. Blessed be God for this, among the thousand other excellent fruits of the Christian religion ! A religion which, like its divine founder, while its grand object is the salvation of men's souls, teaches us also to relieve their bodily wants. It directs us never to forget that He who forgave sins, healed diseases, and while he preached the Gospel, fed the multitude.

It was eight weeks before Tom could be taken out of bed. This was a happy affliction ; for by the grace of God, this long sickness and solitude gave him time to reflect on his past life. He began seriously to hate those darling sins which had brought him to the brink of ruin. He could now pray heartily ; he confessed and lamented his iniquities, with many tears, and began to hope that the mercies of God, through the merits of a Redeemer, might yet be extended to him on his sincere repentance. He resolved never more to return to the same evil courses, but he did not trust in his own strength, but prayed that God would give him grace for the future, as well as pardon for the past. He remembered, and he was hum-

bled at the thought, that he used to have short fits of repentance, and to form resolutions of amendment, in his wild and thoughtless days ; and often when he had a bad head-ache after a drinking bout, or had lost his money at all-fours, he vowed never to drink or play again. But as soon as his head was well and his pockets recruited, he forgot all his resolutions. And how should it be otherwise ? for he trusted in his own strength, he never prayed to God to strengthen him, nor ever avoided the next temptation. He thought that amendment was a thing to be set about at any time ; he did not know that *it is the grace of God which bringeth us to repentance.*

The case was now different. Tom began to find that *his strength was perfect weakness*, and that he could do nothing without the divine assistance, for which he prayed heartily and constantly. He sent home for his Bible and Prayer-book, which he had not opened for two years, and which had been given him when he left the Sunday School. He spent the chief part of his time in reading them, and derived great comfort as well as great knowledge, from this employment of his time. The study of the Bible filled his heart with gratitude to God, who had not cut him off in the midst of his sins ; but had given him space for repentance ; and the agonies he had lately suffered with his broken leg increased his thankfulness, that he had escaped the more dreadful pain of eternal misery. And here let me remark what encouragement this is for rich people to give away Bibles and good books, and not to lose all hope, though, for a time, they see little or no good effect from it. According to all appearance, Tom's books were never likely to do him any good, and yet his generous benefactor, who had cast his bread upon the waters, found it after many days ; for this Bible, which had lain untouched for years, was at last made the instrument of his reformation. God will work in his own good time, and

in his own way, but *our* zeal and our exertions are the means by which he commonly chooses to work.

As soon as he got well, and was discharged from the hospital, Tom began to think he must return to get his bread. At first he had some scruples about going back to his old employ : but, says he sensibly enough, gentlefolks must travel, travellers must have chaises, and chaises must have drivers : 'tis a very honest calling, and I don't know that goodness belongs to one sort of business more than another ; and he who can be good in a state of great temptation, provided the calling be lawful, and the temptations are not of his own seeking, and he be diligent in prayer, may be better than another man for aught I know : and *all that belongs to us is, to do our duty in that state of life in which it shall please God to call us ;* and to leave events in God's hand. Tom had rubbed up his catechism at the hospital, and 'tis a pity that people don't look at their catechism sometimes when they are grown up ; for it is full as good for men and women as it is for children ; nay, better ; for though the answers in it are intended for children to *repeat*, yet the duties enjoined in it are intended for men and women to put in *practice*. It is, if I may so speak, the very grammar of Christianity and of our church, and they who understand every part of their catechism thoroughly, will not be ignorant of anything which a plain Christian need know.

Tom now felt grieved that he was obliged to drive on Sundays. But people who are in earnest and have their hearts in a thing, can find helps in all cases. As soon as he had set down his company at their stage, and had seen his horses fed, says Tom, a man who takes care of his horses, will generally think it right to let them rest an hour or two at least. In every town it is a chance but there may be a church open during part of that time. If the prayers should be over, I'll try hard for the sermon ; and if I dare not stay to the sermon it is a chance but I may catch the

prayers; it is worth trying for, however; and as I used to think nothing of making a push, for the sake of getting an hour to gamble, I need not grudge to take a little pains extraordinary to serve God. By this watchfulness he soon got to know the hours of service at all the towns on the road he travelled; and while the horses fed, Tom went to church; and it became a favorite proverb with him, that *prayers and provender hinder no man's journey*; and I beg leave to recommend Tom's maxim to all travellers, whether master or servant, carrier or coachman.

At first his companions wanted to laugh and make sport of this—but when they saw that no lad on the road was up so early or worked so hard as Tom: when they saw no chaise so neat, no glasses so bright, no harness so tight, no driver so diligent, so clean, or so civil, they found he was no subject to make sport at. Tom indeed was very careful in looking after the linch-pins; in never giving his horses too much water when they were hot; nor whatever was his haste, would he ever gallop them up hill, strike them across the head, or, when tired, cut and slash them, or gallop over the stones, as soon as he got into town, as some foolish fellows do. What helped to cure Tom of these bad practices, was that remark he met with in the Bible, that *a good man is merciful to his beast*. He was much moved one day on reading the prophet Jonah, to observe what compassion the great God of heaven and earth had for poor beasts: for one of the reasons there given why the Almighty was unwilling to destroy the great city of Nineveh was, *because there was much cattle in it*. After this, Tom never could bear to see a wanton stroke inflicted. Doth God care for horses, said he, and shall man be cruel to them?

Tom soon grew rich for one in his station, for every gentleman on the road would be driven by no other lad if *careful Tom* was to be had. Being diligent, he *got* a great deal of money; being frugal, he *spent* but little; and having no vices, he *wasted* none. He soon

found out that there was some meaning in that text which says, that *Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, as well as that which is to come*: for the same principles which make a man sober and honest, have also a natural tendency to make him healthy and rich; while a drunkard and a spendthrift can hardly escape being sick and a beggar. Vice is the parent of misery in both worlds.

After a few years Tom begged a holyday, and made a visit to his native village; his good character had got thither before him. He found his father was dead, but during his long illness Tom had supplied him with money, and by allowing him a trifle every week, had had the honest satisfaction of keeping him from the parish. Farmer Hodges was still living, but being grown old and infirm, he was desirous to retire from business. He retained a great regard for his old servant, Tom; and finding he was worth money, and knowing he knew something of country business, he offered to let him a small farm at an easy rate, and promised his assistance in the management for the first year, with the loan of a small sum of money, that he might set out with a pretty stock. Tom thanked him with tears in his eyes, went back and took a handsome leave of his master, who made him a present of a horse and cart, in acknowledgment of his long and faithful services; for, says he, I have saved many horses by Tom's care and attention, and I could well afford to do the same by every servant who did the same by me; and should be a richer man at the end of every year by the same generosity, provided I could meet with just and faithful servants who deserve the same rewards. Tom was soon settled in his new farm, and in less than a year had got everything neat and decent about him. Farmer Hodges' long experience and friendly advice, joined to his own industry and hard labor, soon brought the farm to great perfection. The regularity, sobriety, peaceableness, and piety of his daily life, his constant attendance at church

twice every Sunday, and his decent and devout behavior when there, soon recommended him to the notice of Dr. Shepherd, who was still living a pattern of zeal, activity, and benevolence to all parish priests. The doctor soon began to hold up Tom, or, as we must now more properly term him, Mr. Thomas White, to the imitation of the whole parish, and the frequent and condescending conversation of this worthy clergyman contributed no less than his preaching to the improvement of his new parishioner in piety.

Farmer White soon found out that a dairy could not well be carried on without a mistress, and began to think seriously of marrying; he prayed to God to direct him in so important a business. He knew that a tawdry, vain, dressy girl, was not likely to make good cheese and butter, and that a worldly ungodly woman would make a sad wife and mistress of a family. He soon heard of a young woman of excellent character, who had been bred up by the vicar's lady, and still lived in the family as upper maid. She was prudent, sober, industrious, and religious. Her neat, modest, and plain appearance at church (for she was seldom seen anywhere else out of her master's family) was an example to all persons in her station, and never failed to recommend her to strangers, even before they had an opportunity of knowing the goodness of her character. It was her character, however, which recommended her to Farmer White. He knew that *favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised*: ay, and not only praised, but chosen too, says Farmer White, as he took down his hat from the nail on which it hung, in order to go and wait on Dr. Shepherd, to break his mind and ask his consent; for he thought it would be a very unhandsome return for all the favors he was receiving from his minister, to decoy away his faithful servant from her place without his consent.

This worthy gentleman, though sorry to lose so valuable a member of his little family, did not scruple

a moment about parting with her, when he found it would be so greatly to her advantage. Tom was agreeably surprised to hear she had saved fifty pounds by her frugality. The doctor married them himself, farmer Hodges being present.

In the afternoon of the wedding day, Dr. Shepherd condescended to call on farmer and Mrs. White, to give words of advice on the new duties they had entered into; a common custom with him on these occasions. He often took an opportunity to drop, in the most kind and tender way, a hint upon the great indecency of making marriages, christenings, and above all, funerals, days of riot and excess, as is too often the case in country villages. The expectation that the vicar might possibly drop in, in his walks, on these festivals, often restrained excessive drinking, and improper conversation, even among those who were not restrained by higher motives, as farmer and Mrs. White were.

What the doctor said was always in such a cheerful, good-humored way, that it was sure to increase the pleasure of the day, instead of damping it. "Well, farmer," said he, "and you, my faithful Sarah, any other friend might recommend peace and agreement to you on your marriage; but I, on the contrary, recommend cares and strifes." The company stared—but Sarah, who knew that her old master was a facetious gentleman, and always had some meaning behind, looked serious. "Cares and strife, sir," said the farmer, "what do you mean?"—"I mean," said he, "for the first, that your cares shall be who shall please God most, and your strifes, who shall serve him best, and do your duty most faithfully. Thus, all your cares and strifes being employed to the highest purposes, all petty cares and worldly strifes shall be at an end."

"Always remember, that you have, both of you, a better friend than each other." The company stared again, and thought no woman could have so good a

friend as her husband. "As you have chosen each other from the best motives," continued the doctor, "you have every reasonable ground to hope for happiness ; but as this world is a soil in which troubles and misfortunes will spring up ; troubles from which you can not save one another ; misfortunes which no human prudence can avoid : then remember, 'tis the best wisdom to go to that friend who is always near, always willing, and always able to help you ; and that friend is God."

"Sir," said Farmer White, "I humbly thank you for all your kind instructions, of which I shall now stand more in need than ever, as I shall have more duties to fulfil. I hope the remembrance of my past offences will keep me humble, and the sense of my remaining sin will keep me watchful. I set out in the world, sir, with what is called a good natural disposition, but I soon found to my cost, that without God's grace that will carry a man but a little way. A good temper is a good thing, but nothing but the fear of God can enable one to bear up against temptation, evil company, and evil passions. The misfortune of breaking my leg, as I then thought it, has proved the greatest blessing of my life. It showed me my own weakness, the value of the Bible, and the goodness of God. How many of my brother drivers have I seen, since that time, cut off in the prime of life by drinking, or sudden accident, while I have not only been spared, but blessed and prospered. O sir ! 'it would be the joy of my heart, if some of my old comrades, good-natured, civil fellows (whom I can't help loving) could see, as I have done, the danger of evil courses before it is too late. Though they may not hearken to you, sir, or any other minister, they may believe *me* because I have been one of them : and I can speak from experience, of the great difference there is, even as to worldly comfort, between a life of sobriety and a life of sin. I could tell them, sir, not as a thing I have read in a book, but as a truth I feel in my own heart,

that to fear God and keep his commandments, will not only bring a man peace at last, but will make him happy *now*. And I will venture to say, sir, that all the stocks, pillories, prisons, and gibbets in the land, though so very needful to keep bad men in order, yet will never restrain a good man from committing evil half so much as that single text, *How shall I do this great wickedness and sin against God?*" Dr. Shepherd condescended to approve of what the farmer had said, kindly shook him by the hand, and took leave.

V. THE PILGRIMS.

METHOUGHT I was once upon a time travelling through a certain land which was very full of people ; but, what was rather odd, not one of all this multitude was at home ; they were all bound to a far distant country. Though it was permitted by the lord that these pilgrims might associate together for their present mutual comfort and convenience ; and each was not only allowed, but commanded, to do the others all the services he could upon their journey, yet it was decreed, that every individual traveller must enter the far country singly. There was a great gulf at the end of the journey, which every one must pass alone, and at his own risk, and the friendship of the whole united world could be of no use in shooting that gulf. The exact time when each was to pass was not known to any ; this the lord always kept a close secret out of kindness, yet still they were as sure that the time must come, and that at no very great distance, as if they had been informed of the very moment. Now, as they knew they were always liable to be called away at an hour's notice, one would have thought they would have been chiefly employed in packing up, and preparing, and getting everything in order. But this was so far from being the case, that it was almost the only thing which they did not think about.

Now, if any of you are setting out upon a little common journey, is not all your leisure time employed in settling your business at home, and packing up every little necessary for your expedition ? And does not the fear of neglecting anything you ought to remember, or may have occasion for, haunt your mind, and sometimes even intrude upon you unseasonably ? And when you are actually on your journey, especially

if you have never been to that place before, or are likely to remain there, don't you begin to think a little about the pleasures and the employments of the place, and to wish to know a little what sort of a place it is? Don't you wonder what is doing there, and are you not anxious to know whether you are properly qualified for the business, or the company you expect to be engaged in? Do you never look at the map, or consult the gazetteer? And don't you try to pick up from your fellow-passengers in the stage-coach any little information you can get? And though you may be obliged, out of civility, to converse with them on common subjects, yet do not your secret thoughts still run upon its business, or its pleasures? And above all, if you are likely to set out early, are you not afraid of oversleeping, and does not that fear keep you upon the watch, so that you are commonly up and ready before the porter comes to summon you? Reader! if this be your case, how surprised will you be to hear that the travellers to the *far country* have not half your prudence, though embarked on a journey of infinitely more importance, bound to a land where nothing can be sent after them, in which, when they are once settled, all errors are irretrievable.

I observed that these pilgrims, instead of being upon the watch, lest they should be ordered off unprepared; instead of laying up any provision, or even making memorandums of what they would be likely to want at the end of their journey, spent most of their time in crowds, either in the way of traffic or diversion. At first, when I saw them so much engaged in conversing with each other, I thought it a good sign, and listened attentively to their talk, not doubting but the chief turn of it would be about the climate, or treasures, or society, they should probably meet with in the *far country*. I supposed they might be also discussing about the best and safest road to it, and that each was availing himself of the knowledge of his neighbor, on a subject of equal importance to all. I listened to

every party, but in scarcely any did I hear one word about the land to which they were bound, though it was their home, the place where their whole interest, expectation, and inheritance lay ; to which also great part of their friends were gone before, and whither they were sure all the rest would follow.—Instead of this, their whole talk was about the business, or the pleasures, or the fashions of the strange but bewitching country which they were merely passing through, and in which they had not one foot of land which they were sure of calling their own for the next quarter of an hour. What little estate they had was *personal*, and not real, and that was a mortgaged, life-hold tenement of clay, not properly their own, but only lent to them on a short uncertain lease, of which three-score years and ten was considered as the longest period, and very few indeed lived in it to the end of the term ; for this was always at the *will of the lord*, part of whose prerogative it was, that he could take away the lease at pleasure, knock down the stoutest tenement at a single blow, and turn out the poor, shivering, helpless inhabitant naked, to that *far country* for which he had made no provision. Sometimes, in order to quicken the pilgrim in his preparation, the lord would break down the tenement by slow degrees ; sometimes he would let it tumble by its own natural decay ; for it was only built to last a certain term, it would often grow so uncomfortable by increasing dilapidations even before the ordinary lease was out, that the lodging was hardly worth keeping, though the tenant could seldom be persuaded to think so, but fondly clung to it to the last.—First the thatch on the top of the tenement changed color, then it fell off and left the roof bare ; then the grinders ceased because they were few ; then the windows became so darkened that the owner could scarcely see through them ; then one prop fell away, then another, then the uprights became bent, and the whole fabric trembled and torrored, with every other symptom of a falling house. But what was remarkable, the more

uncomfortable the house became, and the less prospect there was of staying in it, the more preposterously fond did the tenant grow of his precarious habitation.

On some occasions the lord ordered his messengers, of which he has a great variety, to batter, injure, deface, and almost demolish the frail building, even while it seemed new and strong; this was what the landlord called *giving warning*; but many a tenant would not take warning, and so fond of staying where he was, even under all these inconveniences, that at last he was cast out by ejectment, not being prevailed on to leave his dwelling in a proper manner, though one would have thought the fear of being turned out would have whetted his diligence in preparing for *a better and more enduring inheritance*. For though the people were only tenants at will in these crazy tenements, yet, through the goodness of the same lord, they were assured that he never turned them out of these habitations before he had on his part provided for them a better, so that there was not such a landlord in the world; and though their present dwelling was but frail, being only slightly run up to serve the occasion, yet they might hold their future possession by a most certain tenure, the *word of the lord himself*. This word was entered in a covenant, or title-deed, consisting of many sheets, and because a great many good things were given away in this deed, a book was made of which every soul might get a copy.

This indeed had not always been the case; because, till a few ages back, there had been a sort of monopoly in the case, and "the wise and prudent;" that is, the cunning and fraudulent, had hid these things from "the babes and sucklings;" that is, from the low and ignorant, and many frauds had been practised, and the poor had been cheated of their right; so that not being allowed to read and judge for themselves, they had been sadly imposed upon; but all these tricks had

been put an end to more than two hundred years when I passed through the country, and the meanest man who could read might then have a copy ; so that he might see himself what he had to trust to ; and even those who could not read, might hear it read once or twice every week, at least without pay, by learned and holy men, whose business it was. But it surprised me to see how few comparatively made use of these vast advantages. Of those who had a copy, many laid it carelessly by, expressed a *general* belief in the truth of the title-deed, a *general* satisfaction that they should come in for a share of the inheritance, a *general* good opinion of the lord whose word it was, and a *general* disposition to take his promise upon trust ; always, however, intending, at a *convenient season*, to inquire farther into the matter ; but this convenient season seldom came ; and this neglect of theirs was construed by their lord into a forfeiture of the inheritance.

At the end of this country lay the vast gulf mentioned before ; it was shadowed over by a broad and thick cloud, which prevented the pilgrims from seeing in a distinct manner what was doing behind it, yet such beams of brightness now and then darted through the cloud as enabled those who used a telescope provided for that purpose, to see *the substance of things hoped for* ; but it was not every one who could make use of this telescope ; no eye indeed was *naturally* disposed to it ; but an earnest desire of getting a glimpse of the invisible realities, gave such a strength and steadiness to the eye which used the telescope, as enabled it to discern many things which could not be seen by the natural sight. Above the cloud was this inscription : *The things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.* Of these last things many glorious descriptions had been given ; but as those splendors were at a distance, and as the pilgrims in general did not care to use the telescope, these distant glories made little impression.

The glorious inheritance which lay beyond the cloud, was called *the things above*, while a multitude of trifling objects, which appeared contemptibly small when looked at through the telescope, were called *the things below*. Now, as we know it is nearness which gives size and bulk to any object, it was not wonderful that these ill-judging pilgrims were more struck with these baubles and trifles, which, by laying close at hand, were visible and tempting to the naked eye, and which made up the sum of *the things below*, than with the remote glories of *the things above*; but this was chiefly owing to their not making use of the telescope, through which, if you examined thoroughly *the things below*, they seemed to shrink almost down to nothing, which was indeed their real size; while *the things above* appeared the more beautiful and vast, the more the telescope was used. But the surprising part of the story was this; not that the pilgrims were captivated at first sight with *the things below*, for that was natural enough; but that when they had tried them all over and over, and found themselves deceived and disappointed in almost every one of them, it did not at all lessen their fondness, and they grasped at them again with the same eagerness as before. There were some gay fruits which looked alluring, but on being opened, instead of a kernel, they were found to contain rottenness; and those which seemed the fullest, often proved on trial to be quite hollow and empty. Those which were most tempting to the eye, were often found to be wormwood to the taste, or poison to the stomach, and many flowers that seemed most bright and gay had a worm gnawing at the root; and it was observable that on the finest and brightest of them was seen, when looked at through the telescope, the word *vanity* inscribed in large characters.

Among the chief attractions of *the things below* were certain little lumps of yellow clay, on which almost every eye and every heart was fixed. When I saw the variety of uses to which this clay could be

converted, and the respect which was shown to those who could scrape together the greatest number of pieces, I did not much wonder at the general desire to pick up some of them; but when I beheld the anxiety, the wakefulness, the competitions, the contrivances, the tricks, the frauds, the scuffling, the pushing, the turmoiling, the kicking, the shoving, the cheating, the circumvention, the envy, the malignity, which was excited by a desire to possess this article; when I saw the general scramble among those who had little to get much, and of those who had much to get more, then I could not help applying to these people a proverb in use among us, *that gold may be bought too dear.*

Though I saw that there were various sorts of baubles which engaged the hearts of different travellers, such as an ell of red or blue ribbon, for which some were content to forfeit their future inheritance, committing the sin of Esau without his temptation of hunger; yet the yellow clay I found was the grand object for which most hands were scrambling, and most souls were risked. One thing was extraordinary, that the nearer these people were to being turned out of their tenement, the fonder they grew of these pieces of clay; so that I naturally concluded they meant to take the clay with them to the *far country*, to assist them in their establishment in it; but I soon learned this clay was not current there, the lord having farther declared to these pilgrims that as *they had brought nothing into this world, they could carry nothing away.*

I inquired of the different people who were raising the various heaps of clay, some of a larger, some of a smaller size, why they discovered such unremitting anxiety, and for whom? Some, whose piles were immense, told me they were heaping up for their children; this I thought very right, till, on casting my eyes around, I observed many of the children of these very people had large heaps of their own. Oth-

ers told me it was for their grandchildren ; but on inquiry I found these were not yet born, and in many cases there was little chance that they ever would. The truth, on a close examination, proved to be, that the true genuine heapers really heaped for themselves ; that it was, in fact, neither for friend nor child, but to gratify an inordinate appetite of their own. Nor was I much surprised after this to see these yellow hoards at length *canker, and the rust of them become a witness against the hoarders, and eat their flesh as it were fire.*

Many, however, who had set out with a high heap of their father's raising, before they had got one third of their journey, had scarcely a single piece left. As I was wondering what had caused these enormous piles to vanish in so short a time, I spied scattered up and down the country all sorts of odd inventions, for some or other of which the vain possessors of the great heaps of clay had truckled and bartered them away in fewer hours than their ancestors had spent years in getting them together. O what a strange unaccountable medley it was ! and what was ridiculous enough, I observed that the greatest quantity of the clay was always exchanged for things that were of no use that I could discover, owing I suppose to my ignorance of the manners of the country.

In one place I saw large heaps exhausted, in order to set two idle pampered horses a running ; but the worst part of the joke was, the horses did not run to fetch or carry anything, of course were of no kind of use, but merely to let the gazers see which could run fastest. Now, this gift of swiftness, exercised to no useful purpose, was only one out of many instances, I observed, of talents employed to no end. In another place I saw whole piles of the clay spent to maintain long ranges of buildings full of dogs, on provisions which would have nicely fattened some thousands of pilgrims, who sadly wanted fattening, and whose ragged tenements were out at elbows, for want of a little help to repair them. Some of the piles were regu-

larly pulled down once in seven years, in order to corrupt certain needy pilgrims to belie their consciences, by doing that for a bribe which they were bound to do from principle. Others were spent in playing with white stiff bits of paper, painted over with red and black spots, in which I thought there must be some conjuring, because the very touch of these painted pasteboards made the heaps fly from one to another, and back again to the same, in a way that natural causes could not account for. There was another proof that there must be some magic in this business, which was, that if a pasteboard with red spots fell into a hand which wanted a black one, the person changed color, his eyes flashed fire, and he discovered other symptoms of madness, which showed there was some witchcraft in the case. These clean little pasteboards, as harmless as they looked, had the wonderful power of pulling down the highest piles in less time than all the other causes put together. I observed that many small piles were given in exchange for an enchanted liquor which when the purchaser had drunk to a little excess, he lost power of managing the rest of his heap without losing the love of it; and thus the excess of indulgence, by making him a beggar, deprived him of that very gratification on which his heart was set.

Now I find it was the opinion of sober pilgrims, that either hoarding the clay, or trucking it for any such purposes as the above, was thought exactly the same offence in the eyes of the lord; and it was expected that when they should come under his more immediate jurisdiction in the *far country*, the penalty annexed to hoarding and squandering would be nearly the same. While I examined the countenances of the owners of the heaps, I observed that those who I well knew never intended to make any use at all of their heap, were far more terrified at the thought of losing it, or of being torn from it, than those were who were employing it in the most useful manner. Those who

best knew what to do with it, set their hearts least upon it, and were always most willing to leave it. But such riddles were common in this odd country. It was indeed a very land of paradoxes.

Now I wondered why these pilgrims, who were naturally made erect with an eye formed to look up to *the things above*, yet had their eyes almost constantly bent in the other direction, riveted on the earth, and fastened on *things below*, just like those animals who walk on all four. I was told they had not always been subject to this weakness of sight, and proneness to earth: that they had originally been upright and beautiful, having been created after the image of the lord, who was himself the perfection of beauty; that he had, at first, placed them in a far superior situation, which he had given them in perpetuity; but that their first ancestors fell from it through pride and carelessness; that upon this the freehold was taken away, they lost their original strength, brightness, and beauty, and were driven out into this strange country, where, however, they had every opportunity given them of recovering their original health, and the lord's favor and likeness; for they were become so disfigured, and were grown so unlike him, that you would hardly believe they were his own children, though, 'n some, the resemblance was become again visible.

I was sorry to observe many of the fairer part of these pilgrims spend too much of their heaps in adorning and beautifying their tenements of clay, in painting, white-washing, and enamelling them. All those tricks, however, did not preserve them from decay; and when they grew old, they looked worse for all this cost and varnish. Some, however, acted a more sensible part, and spent no more upon their mouldering tenements than just to keep them whole and clean, and in good repair, which is what every tenant ought to do; and I observed that those who were most moderate in the care of their own tenements, were most attentive to repair and warm the ragged tenements

of others. But none did this with much zeal or acceptance, but those who had acquired a habit of overlooking the *things below*, and who also, by the constant use of the telescope had got their natural weak and dim sight so strengthened, as to be able to discern pretty distinctly the nature of the *things above*. The habit of fixing their eyes on these glories made all the shining trifles, which compose the mass of *things below*, at last appear in their own diminutive littleness. For it was in this case particularly true, that things are only big or little by comparison; and there was no other way of making the *things below*, appear as small as they really were, but by comparing them, by means of the telescope, with the *things above*. But I observed that the false judgment of the pilgrims ever kept pace with their wrong practices; for those who kept their eyes fastened on the *things below*, were reckoned wise in their generation, while the few who looked forward to the future glories, were accounted by the bustlers, or heapers, to be either fools or mad.

Most of these pilgrims went on in adorning their tenements, adding to their heaps, grasping the *things below* as if they would never let them go, shutting their eyes, instead of using their telescope, and neglecting their title deed, as if it was the parchment of another man's estate, and not of their own; till one after another each felt his tenement tumbling about his ears.—Oh! then what a busy, bustling, anxious, terrifying, distracting moment was that! What a deal of business was to be done, and what a strange time was this to do it in! Now, to see the confusion and dismay occasioned by having left everything to the last minute. First, some one was sent for to make over the yellow heaps to another, which the heaper now found would be of no use to himself in shooting the gulf; a transfer which ought to have been made while the tenement was sound. Then there was a consultation between two or three masons at once perhaps, to try to patch up the walls, and strengthen the props,

and stop the decays of the tumbling tenement ; but not till the masons were forced to declare it was past repairing (a truth they were rather too apt to keep back) did the tenant seriously think it was time to pack up, prepare, and begone. Then what sending for the wise men who professed to explain the title deed ! And oh ! what remorse that they had neglected to examine it till their senses were too confused for so weighty a business ! What reproaches, or what exhortations to others, to look better after their own affairs than they had done. Even to the wisest of the inhabitants the falling of their tenements was a solemn thing ; solemn but not surprising ; they had long been packing up and preparing ; they praised their lord's goodness that they had been suffered to stay so long ; many acknowledged the mercy of their frequent warnings, and confessed that those very dilapidations which had made the house uncomfortable had been a blessing, as it had set them on diligent preparation for their future inheritance ; had made them more earnest in examining their title to it, and had set them on such a frequent application to the telescope, that *the things above* had seemed every day to approach nearer and nearer, and the *things below* to recede and vanish in proportion. These desired not to be *unclothed*, but to be *clothed upon*, for they knew that if their tabernacle was dissolved, they had an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

VI. THE VALLEY OF TEARS.

ONCE upon a time methought I set out upon a long journey, and the place through which I travelled appeared to be a dark valley, which was called the Valley of Tears. It had obtained this name, not only on account of the many sorrowful adventures which poor passengers commonly meet with in their journey though it; but also because most of these travellers entered it weeping and crying, and left it in very great pain and anguish. This vast valley was full of people of all colors, ages, sizes and descriptions. But whether white, or black, or tawny, all were travelling the same road; or rather they were taking different little paths which all led to the same common end.

Now it was remarkable, that notwithstanding the different complexions, ages, and tempers of this vast variety of people, yet all resembled each other in this one respect, that each had a burden on his back which he was destined to carry through the toil and heat of the day, until he should arrive, by a longer or shorter course, at his journey's end. These burdens would in general have made the pilgrimage quite intolerable, had not the lord of the valley, out of his great compassion for these poor pilgrims, provided, among other things, the following means for their relief:—

In their full view over the entrance of the valley, there were written, in great letters of gold, the following words:—

Bear ye one another's burdens.

Now I saw in my vision that many of the travellers hurried on without stopping to read this inscription, and others, though they had once read it, yet paid little or no attention to it. A third sort thought it

very good advice for other people, but very seldom applied it to themselves. They uniformly desired to avail themselves of the assistance which by this injunction others were bound to offer them, but seldom considered that the obligation was mutual, and that reciprocal wants and reciprocal services formed the strong cord in the bond of charity. In short, I saw that too many of these people were of opinion that they had burdens enough of their own, and that there was therefore no occasion to take upon them those of others; so each tried to make his own load as light, and his own journey as pleasant as he could, without so much as once casting a thought on a poor overloaded neighbor. Here, however, I have to make a rather singular remark, by which I shall plainly show the folly of these selfish people. It was so ordered and contrived by the lord of this valley, that if any one stretched out his hand to lighten a neighbor's burden, in fact he never failed to find that he at that moment also lightened his own. Besides the benefit of helping each other, was as mutual as the obligation. If a man helped his neighbor, it commonly happened that some other neighbor came by-and-by and helped him in his turn; for there was no such thing as what we called *independence* in the whole valley. Not one of all these travellers, however stout and strong, could move on comfortably without assistance, for so the lord of the valley, whose laws were all of them kind and good, had expressly ordained.

I stood still to watch the progress of these poor wayfaring people, who moved slowly on, like so many ticket-porters, with burdens of various kinds on their backs; of which some were heavier, and some were lighter, but from a burden of one kind or other, not one traveller was entirely free. There might be some difference in the degree, and some distinction in the nature, but exemption there was none.

The Widow.—A sorrowful widow, oppressed with the burden of grief for the loss of an affectionate hus-

band, moved heavily on ; and would have been bowed down by her heavy load, had not the surviving children with great alacrity stepped forward and supported her. Their kindness after a while, so much lightened the load which threatened at first to be intolerable, that she even went on her way with cheerfulness, and more than repaid their help, by applying the strength she derived from it to their future assistance.

The Husband.—I next saw a poor old man tottering under a burden so heavy, that I expected him every moment to sink under it. I peeped into his pack, and saw it was made up of many sad articles ; there were poverty, oppression, sickness, debt, and, what made by far the heaviest part, undutiful children. I was wondering how it was that he got on even so well as he did, till I spied his wife, a kind, meek, christian woman, who was doing her utmost to assist him. She quietly got behind, gently laid her shoulder to the burden, and carried a much larger portion of it than appeared to me when I was at a distance. It was not the smallest part of the benefit that she was anxious to conceal it. She not only sustained him by her strength, but cheered him by her counsels. She told him, that “through much tribulation we must enter into rest;” that “he that overcometh shall inherit all things.” In short, she so supported his fainting spirit, that he was enabled to “run with patience the race which was set before him.”

The Kind Neighbor.—An infirm blind woman was creeping forward with a very heavy burden, in which were packed sickness and want, with numberless other of those raw materials, out of which human misery is worked up. She was so weak that she could not have got on at all, had it not been for the kind assistance of another woman almost as poor as herself ; who, though she had no light burden of her own, cheerfully lent a helping hand to a fellow traveller who was still more heavily laden. This friend had indeed little or nothing to give, but the very voice of kindness is

soothing to the weary. And I remarked in many other cases, that it was not so much the degree of the help afforded, as the manner of helping that lightened the burdens. Some had a coarse, rough, clumsy way of assisting a neighbor, which, though in fact it might be of real use, yet seemed, by galling the traveller, to add to the load it was intended to lighten ; while I observed in others that so cheap a kindness as a mild word, or even an affectionate look made a poor burdened wretch move on cheerily.—The bare feeling that some human being cared for him, seemed to lighten the load.—But to return to this kind neighbor. She had a little old book in her hand, the covers of which were torn out by much use. When she saw the blind woman ready to faint, she would read her a few words out of this book, such as the following—“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”—“Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.”—“I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.”—“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” These quickened the pace, and sustained the spirits of the blind traveller : and the kind neighbor by thus directing the attention of the poor sufferer to the blessings of a better world, helped to enable her to sustain the afflictions of this, more effectually than if she had had gold and silver to bestow on her.

The Clergyman.—A pious minister, sinking under the weight of a distressed parish, whose worldly wants he was totally unable to bear, was suddenly relieved by a charitable widow, who came up and took all the sick and hungry on her own shoulders as her part of the load. The burden of the parish thus divided became tolerable. The minister being no longer bowed down by the temporal distresses of his people, applied himself cheerfully to his own part of the weight. And it was pleasant to see how those two persons, neither of them very strong, or rich, or healthy, by

thus kindly uniting together, were enabled to bear the weight of a whole parish; though singly, either of them must have sunk under the attempt. And I remember one great grief I felt during my whole journey was, that I did not see more of this union and concurring kindness, more of this acting in concert, by which all the burdens might have been so easily divided. It troubled me to observe, that of all the laws of the valley there was not one more frequently broken than *the law of kindness*.

Among the travellers, I had occasion to remark, that those who most kicked and struggled under their burdens, only made them so much the heavier, for their shoulders became extremely galled by those vain and ineffectual struggles. The load, if borne patiently, would in the end have turned even to the advantage of the bearers, for so the lord of the valley had kindly decreed; but as to these grumblers, they had all the smart, and none of the benefit; they had the present suffering without the future reward. But the thing which made all these burdens seem so very heavy was, that in every one without exception, there was a certain *inner packet*, which most of the travellers took pains to conceal, and kept carefully wrapped up; and while they were forward enough to complain of the other part of their burdens, few said a word about this, though in truth it was the pressing weight of this *secret packet* which served to render the general burden so intolerable. In spite of all their caution, I contrived to get a peep at it. I found in each that this packet had the same label; the word SIN was written on all as a general title, and in ink so black, that they could not wash it out. I observed that most of them took no small pains to hide the writing; but I was surprised to see that they did not try to get rid of the load, but the label. If any kind friend who assisted these people in bearing their burdens, did but so much as hint at the *secret packet*, or advise them to get rid of it, they took fire at once, and commonly

denied they had any such article in their portmanteau ; and it was those whose *secret packet* swelled to the most enormous size, who most stoutly denied they had any.

I saw with pleasure, however, that some who had long labored heartily to get rid of this inward packet, at length found it much diminished, and the more this packet shrunk in size, the lighter was the other part of their burden also. I observed, moreover, that though the label always remained in some degree indelible, yet that those who were earnest to get rid of the load, found that the original traces of the label grew fainter also ; it was never quite obliterated in any, though in some cases it seemed nearly effaced.

Then methought, all at once, I heard a voice, as it had been the voice of an angel, crying out and saying, "Ye unhappy pilgrims, why are ye troubled about the burden which ye are doomed to bear through this valley of tears ? Know ye not, that as soon as ye shall have escaped out of this valley the whole burden shall drop off, provided ye neglect not to remove that inward weight, that secret load of *SIN* which principally oppresses you ? Study then the whole will of the lord of this valley. Learn from him how this heavy part of your burdens may now be lessened, and how at last it shall be removed for ever. Be comforted. Faith and hope may cheer you even in this valley. The passage, though it seems long to weary travellers, is comparatively short ; for beyond there is a land of everlasting rest, where ye shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, where ye shall be led by living fountains of waters, and all tears shall be wiped away from your eyes."

VII. THE STRAIT GATE AND THE BROAD WAY.

I HAD a second vision of what was passing in the Valley of Tears. Methought I saw again the same kind of travellers, and they were wandering at large through the same vast wilderness. At first setting out on his journey, each traveller had a small lamp so fixed in his bosom that it seemed to make a part of himself; but as this natural light did not prove to be sufficient to direct them in the right way, the king of the country, in pity to their wanderings and blindness, out of his gracious condescension, promised to give these poor wayfaring people an additional supply of light from his own royal treasury. But as he did not choose to lavish his favors where there seemed no disposition to receive them, he would not bestow any of his oil on such as did not think it worth asking for. "Ask and ye shall have," was the universal rule he had laid down for them. But though they knew the condition of the obligation, many were prevented from asking through pride and vanity, for they thought they had light enough already, preferring the feeble glimmerings of their own lamp, to all the offered light from the king's treasury. Yet it was observed of those who rejected it, as thinking they had enough, that hardly any acted up to what even their own natural light showed them. Others were deterred from asking, because they were told that this light not only pointed out the dangers and difficulties of the road, but by a certain reflecting power, it turned inward on themselves, and revealed to them ugly sights in their own hearts, to which they rather chose to be blind; for those travellers were of that preposterous number who "chose darkness rather than light," and for the

old obvious reason, "because their deeds were evil." Now, it was remarkable that these two properties were inseparable, and that the lamp would be of little outward use, except to those who used it as an internal reflector. A threat and a promise also never failed to accompany the offer of this light from the king; a promise that to those who improved what they had, more should be given; and a threat, that from those who did not use it wisely, should be taken away even what they had.

I observed that when the road was very dangerous; when terrors, and difficulties, and death beset the fervent traveller; then, on their faithful importunity, the king voluntarily gave large and bountiful supplies of light, such as in common seasons never could have been expected: always proportioning the quantity given to the necessity of the case; "as their day was, such was their light and strength."

Though many chose to depend entirely on their own original lamp, yet it was observed that this light was apt to go out if left to itself. It was easily blown out by those violent gusts which were perpetually howling through the wilderness; and indeed it was the natural tendency of that unwholesome atmosphere to extinguish it, just as you have seen a candle go out when exposed to the vapors and foul air of a damp room. It was a melancholy sight to see multitudes of travellers heedlessly pacing on, boasting they had light enough of their own, and despising the offer of more. But what astonished me most of all was, to see many, and some of them too accounted men of first rate wit, actually busy in blowing out their own light, because while any spark of it remained, it only served to torment them, and point out things which they did not wish to see. And having once blown out their own light, they were not easy till they had blown out that of their neighbors also; so that a good part of the wilderness seemed to exhibit a sort of universal *blind-man's buff*, each endeavoring to catch his neighbor,

while his own voluntary blindness exposed him to be caught himself; so that each was actually falling into the snare he was laying for another, till at length, as selfishness is the natural consequence of blindness, "catch he that catch can," became the general motto of the wilderness.

I saw in my vision, that there were some who were busy in strewing the most gaudy flowers over the numerous bogs, and precipices, and pitfalls with which the wilderness abounded; and thus making danger and death look so gay, the poor thoughtless creatures seemed to delight in their own destruction. Those pitfalls did not appear deep or dangerous to the eye, because over them were raised gay edifices with alluring names. These were filled with singing men and singing women, and with dancing, and feasting, and gaming, and drinking, and jollity, and madness. But though the scenery was gay, the footing was unsound. The floors were full of holes, through which the unthinking merry-makers were continually sinking. Some tumbled through in the middle of a song; more at the end of a feast; and though there were many a cup of intoxication wreathed round with flowers, yet there was always poison at the bottom. But what most surprised me, was that though no day passed over their heads in which some of the most merry-makers did not drop through, yet their loss made little impression on those who were left. Nay, instead of being awakened to more circumspection and self-denial by the continual dropping off of those about them, several of them seemed to borrow from thence an argument of a direct contrary tendency, and the very shortness of time was only urged as a reason to use it more sedulously for the indulgence in sensual delights. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." "Let us crown ourselves with rose-buds before they are withered." With these and a thousand other such little inscriptions, the gay garlands of the wilderness were decorated. Some admired poets were set to

work to set the most corrupt sentiments to the most harmonious tunes ; these were sung without scruple, chiefly indeed by the looser sons of riot, but not seldom also by the more orderly daughters of sobriety, who were not ashamed to sing to the sound of instruments, sentiments so corrupt and immoral, that they would have blushed to speak or read them : but the music seemed to sanctify the corruption, especially such as was connected with love or drinking.

I observed that all the travellers who had so much as a spark of life left, seemed every now and then, as they moved onward, to cast an eye, though with very different degrees of attention, toward the *Happy Land*, which they were told lay at the end of their journey ; but as they could not see very far forward, and as they knew there was a *dark and shadowy valley* which must needs be crossed before they could attain to the *Happy Land*, they tried to turn their attention from it as much as they could. The truth is, they were not sufficiently apt to consult a map and a road-book which the king had given them, and which pointed out the path to the *Happy Land* so clearly, that the “wayfaring men, though simple, could not err.” This map also defined very correctly the boundaries of the *Happy Land* from the *Land of Misery*, both of which lay on the other side of the dark and shadowy valley ; but so many beacons and light-houses were erected, so many clear and explicit directions furnished for avoiding the one country and attaining the other, that it was not the king’s fault, if even one single traveller got wrong. But I am inclined to think that, in spite of the map and the road-book, and the king’s word, and his offers of assistance to get them thither, that the travellers in general did not heartily and truly believe, after all, that there was any such country as the *Happy Land* ; or at least the paltry and transient pleasures of the wilderness so besotted them, the thoughts of the dark and shadowy valley so frightened them, that they thought they

should be more comfortable by banishing all thought and forecast, and driving the subject quite out of their heads.

I also saw in my dream, that there were two roads through the wilderness, one of which every traveller must needs take. The first was narrow, and difficult, and rough, but it was infallibly safe. It did not admit the traveller to stray either to the right hand or to the left, yet it was far from being destitute of real comforts or sober pleasures. The other was a *broad and tempting way*, abounding with luxurious fruits and gaudy flowers, to tempt the eye and please the appetite. To forget this *dark valley*, through which every traveller was well assured he must one day pass, seemed the object of general desire. To this grand end, all that human ingenuity could invent was industriously set to work. The travellers read, and they wrote, and they painted, and they sung, and they danced, and they drank, as they went along, not so much because they all cared for these things, or had any real joy in them, as because this restless activity served to divert their attention from ever being fixed on the *dark and shadowy valley*.

I also saw in my dream, that many travellers who had a strong dread of ending at the *Land of Misery* walked up to the *Strait Gate*, hoping that though the entrance was narrow, yet if they could once get in, the road would widen; but what was their grief, when on looking more closely they saw written on the inside, "Narrow is the way;" this made them take fright; they compared the inscriptions with which the whole way was lined, such as, "Be ye not conformed to this world; deny yourselves, take up your cross," with all the tempting pleasures of the wilderness. Some indeed recollected the fine descriptions they had read of the *Happy Land*, the *Golden City*, and the *Rivers of Pleasure*, and they sighed: but then those joys were distant, and from the faintness of their light, they soon got to think that what was remote

might be uncertain, and while the present good increased in bulk the distant good receded, diminished, disappeared. Their faith failed; they would trust no farther than they could see; they drew back and got into the *Broad Way*, taking a common but sad refuge in the number, the fashion, and the gayety of their companions. When these faint-hearted people, who yet had set out well, turned back, their light was quite put out, and then they became worse than those who had made no attempt to get in. "For it is impossible, that is, it is next to impossible, for those who were enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance."

A few honest humble travellers, not naturally stronger than the rest, but strengthened by their trust in the king's word, came up, by the light of their lamps, and meekly entered in at the *Strait Gate*. As they advanced farther they felt less heavy, and though the way did not in reality grow wider, yet they grew reconciled to the narrowness of it, especially when they saw the walls here and there studded with certain jewels called *promises*, such as: "He that endureth to the end shall be saved;" and "my grace is sufficient for you." Some, when they were almost ready to faint, were encouraged by seeing that many niches in the *Narrow Way* were filled with statues and pictures of saints and martyrs, who had borne their testimony at the stake, that the *Narrow Way* was the safe way; and these travellers, instead of sinking at the sight of the painted wheel and gibbet, the sword and furnace, were animated with these words written under them, "Those that wear white robes, came out of great tribulation," and "be ye followers of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

In the meantime there came a great multitude of travellers all from Laodicea; this was the largest party I had yet seen; these were *neither hot nor cold*; they

would not give up future hope, and they could not endure present pain. So they contrived to deceive themselves, by fancying that though they resolved to keep the *Happy Land* in view, yet there must needs be many different ways which lead to it, no doubt all equally sure, without all being equally rough: so they set on foot certain little contrivances to attain the end without using the means, and softened down the spirit of the king's directions to fit them to their own practice. Sometimes they would split a direction in two, and only use that half which suited them. For instance when they met with the following rule on the way-post, "Trust in the lord and be doing good," they would take the first half, and make themselves easy with a general sort of trust, that through the mercy of the king all would go well with them, though they themselves did nothing. And on the other hand, many made sure that a few good works of their own would do their business, and carry them safely to the *Happy Land*, though they did *not* trust in the lord, nor place any faith in his word. So they took the second half of the spliced direction. Thus some perished by a lazy faith, and others by a working pride.

I set myself to observe what was the particular let, molestation, and hindrance, which obstructed particular travellers in their endeavors to enter in at the *Strait Gate*. I remarked a huge portly man who seemed desirous of getting in, but he carried about him such a vast provision of bags full of gold, and had on so many rich garments, which stuffed him out so wide, that though he pushed and squeezed, like one who had really a mind to get in, yet he could not possibly do so. Then I heard a voice crying, "Wo to him who loadeth himself with thick clay." The poor man felt something was wrong, and even went so far as to change some of his more cumbersome vanities into others which seemed less bulky, but still he and his pack were much too wide for the gate. He would not however give up the matter so easily, but began

to throw away a little of the coarser part of his baggage, but still I remarked that he threw away none of the vanities which lay near his heart. He tried again, but it would not do ; still his dimensions were too large. He now looked up and read these words, "How hardly shall those who have riches enter into the kingdom of God." The poor man sighed to find that it was impossible to enjoy his fill of both worlds, and "went away sorrowing." If he ever afterward cast a thought toward the *Happy Land*, it was only to regret that the road which led to it was too narrow to admit any but the meagre children of want, who were not so encumbered by wealth as to be too big for the passage. Had he read on, he would have seen that "with God all things are possible."

Another advanced with much confidence of success, for having little worldly riches or honors, the gate did not seem so strait to him. He got to the threshold triumphantly, and seemed to look back with disdain on all that he was quitting. He soon found, however, that he was so bloated with pride, and stuffed out with self-sufficiency, that he could not get in. Nay, he was in a worse way than the rich man just named ; for *he* had been willing to throw away some of his outward luggage, whereas this man refused to part with a grain of that vanity and self-applause which made him too large for the way. The sense of his own worth so swelled him out that he stuck fast in the gateway, and could neither get in nor out. Finding now that he must cut off all those big thoughts of himself, if he wished to be reduced to such a size as to pass the gate, he gave up all thoughts of it. He scorned that humility and self-denial which might have shrunk him down to the proper dimensions ; the more he insisted on his own qualifications for entrance, the more impossible it became to enter, for the bigger he grew. Finding that he must become quite another manner of man before he could hope to get in, he gave up the desire ; and I now saw that though

he set his face toward the *Happy Land* he could not get an inch forward, yet the instant he made a motion to turn back into the world, his speed became rapid enough, and he got back into the *Broad Way* much sooner than he got out of it.

Many, who for a time were brought down from their usual bulk by some affliction, seemed to get in with ease. They now thought all their difficulties over, for having been surfeited with the world during their late disappointment, they turned their backs upon it willingly enough, and fancied they were tired of it. A fit of sickness, perhaps, which is very apt to *reduce*, had for a time brought their bodies into subjection, so that they were enabled just to get in at the gateway; but as soon as health and spirits returned, the way grew narrower and narrower to them; and they could not get on, but turned short, and got back into the world. I saw many attempt to enter who were stopped short by a large burden of *worldly cares*; others by a load of *idolatrous attachments*; but I observed that nothing proved a more complete bar than that vast *bundle of prejudices* with which multitudes were loaded.—Other were fatally obstructed by loads of *bad habits* which they would not lay down, though they knew it prevented their entrance.

Some few, however, of most descriptions, who had kept their *light* alive by craving constant supplies from the king's treasury, got through at last by a strength which they felt not to be their own. One poor man, who carried the largest bundle of bad habits I had seen, could not get on a step; he never ceased, however, to implore for light enough to see where his misery lay; he threw down one of his bundles, then another, but all to little purpose; still he could not stir. At last *striving as if in agony*, which is the true way of entering, he threw down the heaviest article in his pack; this was *selfishness*: the poor fellow felt relieved at once, his light burned brightly, and the rest of his pack was as nothing.

What grieved me most was to observe that many who had got on successfully a good way, now stopped to rest and to admire their own progress. While they were thus valuing themselves on their attainments, their light diminished. While these were boasting how far they had left others behind who had set out much earlier, some slower travellers whose beginning had not been so promising, but who had walked meekly and circumspectly, now outstripped them. These last walked not as though they had already attained ; but this one thing they did, forgetting the things which were behind, they pushed forward to the mark, for the prize of their high calling. These, though naturally weak, yet *by laying aside every weight, finished the race that was before them.* Those who had kept their "light burning," who were not "wise in their own conceit," who "laid their help on one that is mighty," who had "chosen to suffer affliction rather than to enjoy the pleasure of sin for a season," came at length to the *Happy Land*. They had indeed the *Dark and Shadowy Valley* to cross, but even there they found a *rod and a staff* to comfort them. Their light instead of being put out by the damps of the Valley and of the Shadow of death, often burned with added brightness. Some indeed suffered the terrors of a short eclipse ; but even then their light, like that of a dark lantern, was not put out ; it was only turned for a while from him who carried it, and even these often finished their course with joy. —But the instant they reached the *Happy Land*, all tears were wiped from their eyes, and the king himself came forth and welcomed them into his presence, and put a crown upon their heads, with these words, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

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
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